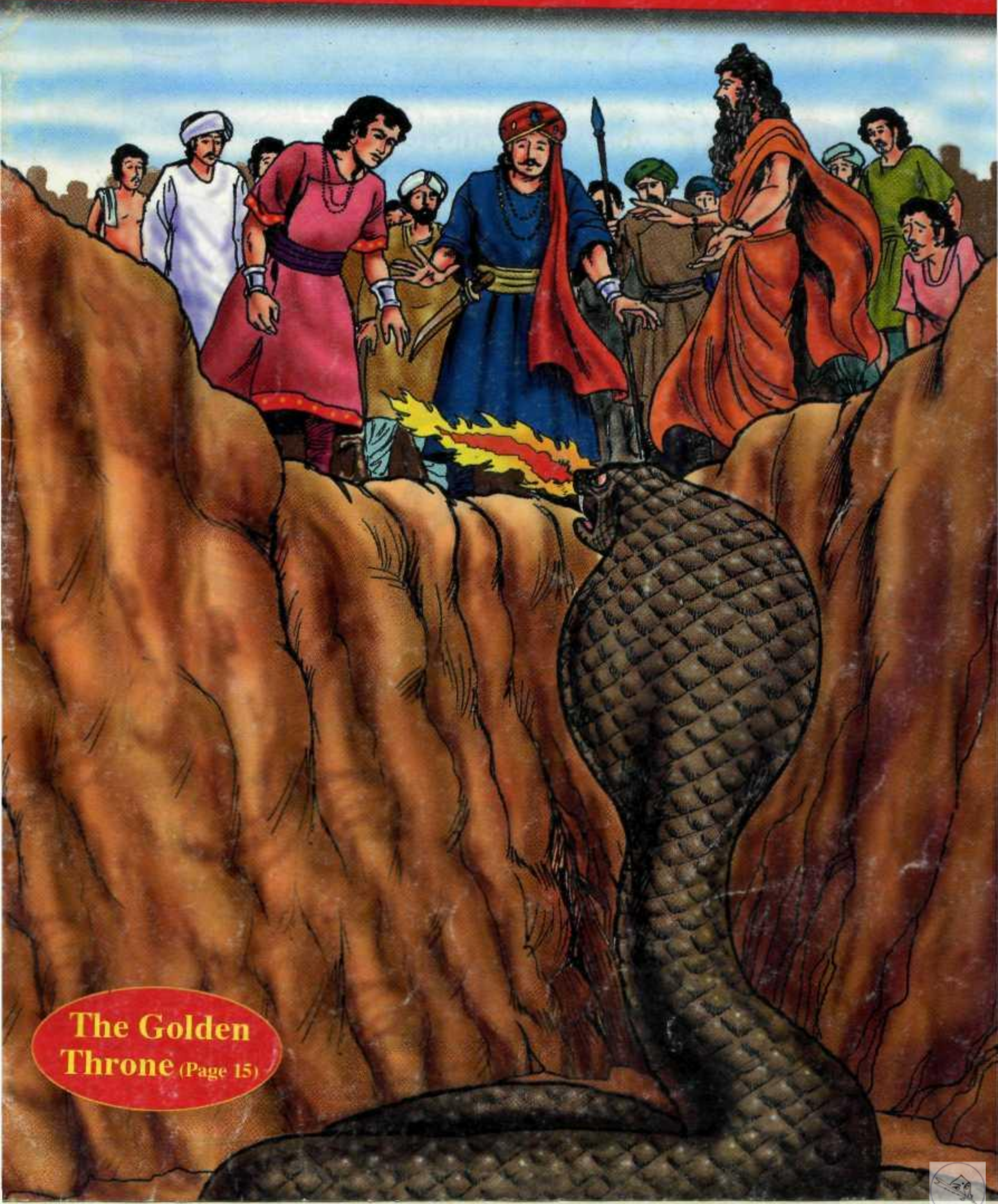




March 2000-Rs. 10/-

CHANDAMAMA



The Golden Throne (Page 15)



THE LAST CENTURY'S HALL OF FAME
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OF A GREAT ONE WHO DREAMED AND DID
AND WHO LIKE YOU WAS ONCE A KID...



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THOMAS INVENTED
THE ELECTRIC LIGHT



MOHANDAS SET HIS PEOPLE FREE
THE LUMIERE BOYS SHOT THE FIRST MOVIE

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HIS NATION FAR
HENRY MADE
A MOTOR CAR



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SICK MAN'S WOES
BILL GAVE THE
WORLD WINDOWS



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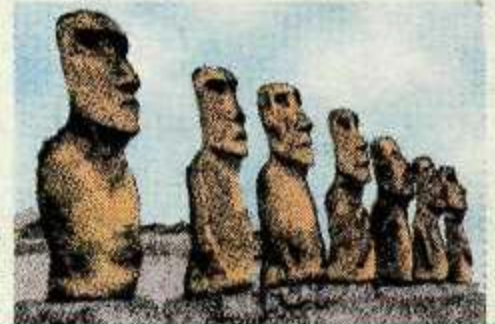
HIGHLIGHTS



The Saga of India



The Golden Throne



Unsolved Mysteries



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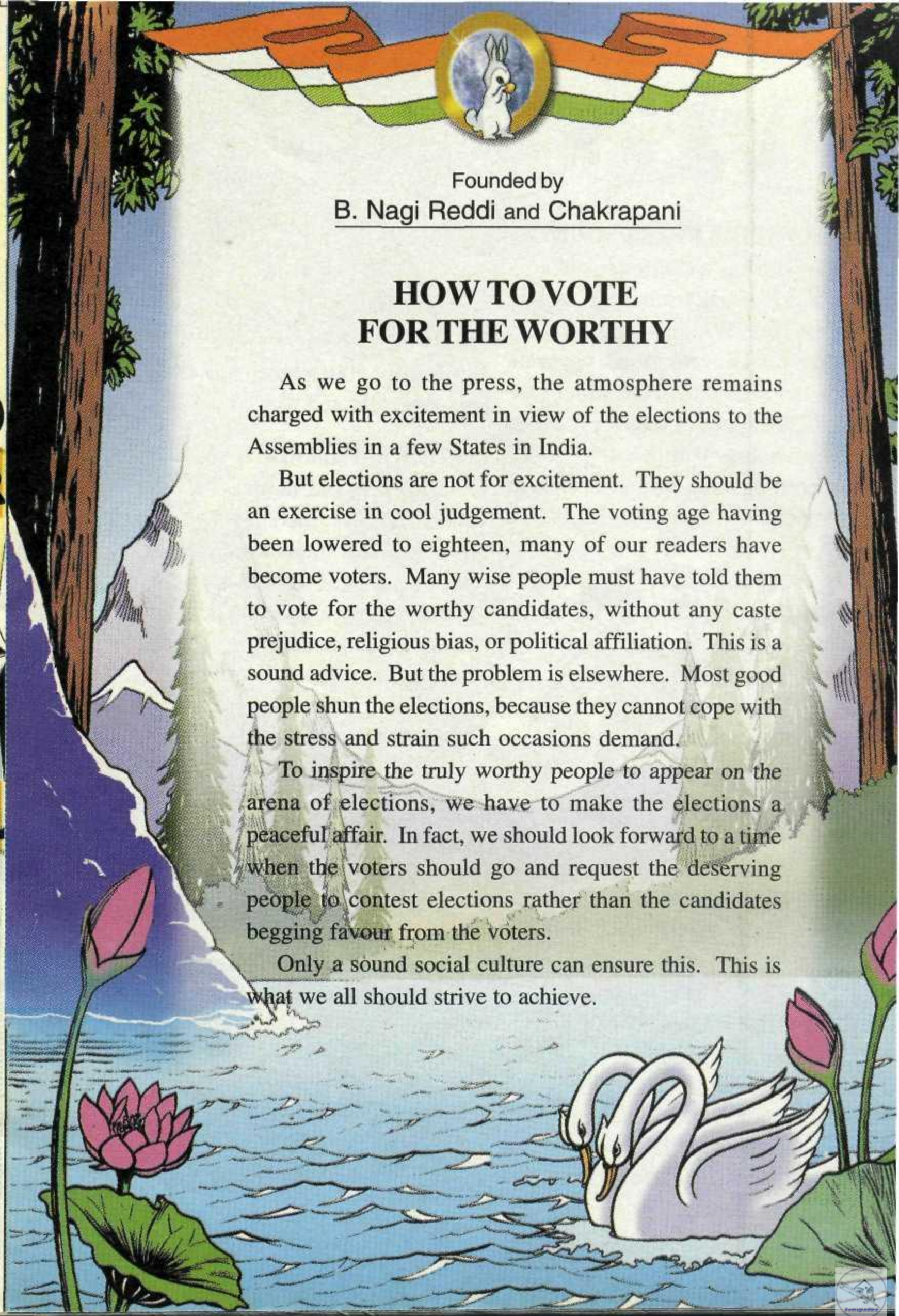
HOW TO VOTE FOR THE WORTHY

As we go to the press, the atmosphere remains charged with excitement in view of the elections to the Assemblies in a few States in India.

But elections are not for excitement. They should be an exercise in cool judgement. The voting age having been lowered to eighteen, many of our readers have become voters. Many wise people must have told them to vote for the worthy candidates, without any caste prejudice, religious bias, or political affiliation. This is a sound advice. But the problem is elsewhere. Most good people shun the elections, because they cannot cope with the stress and strain such occasions demand.

To inspire the truly worthy people to appear on the arena of elections, we have to make the elections a peaceful affair. In fact, we should look forward to a time when the voters should go and request the deserving people to contest elections rather than the candidates begging favour from the voters.

Only a sound social culture can ensure this. This is what we all should strive to achieve.



NEWS FLASH

THE VAMPIRE IN THE POCKET

One who has a cigarette packet in his pocket is actually nursing a vampire in his pocket. While one puffs away, one does not know that each cigarette sucks out 11 minutes of one's life. One pack of 20 cigarettes reduces the life-span by 3 hours 40 minutes.

According to an estimate made in November 1999, there were 1.2. billion



smokers in the world. By the end of the year, 4 million of them are believed to have died of tobacco-related diseases.

LAUGH YOUR WAY TO LONGER LIFE

Just as smoking kills, laughing adds years to one's life, it is universally believed, though we do not have any statistics to prove it. In any case, laughter makes life joyful. On the 9th



of January, 500 laughter clubs all over the world celebrated World Laughter Day.

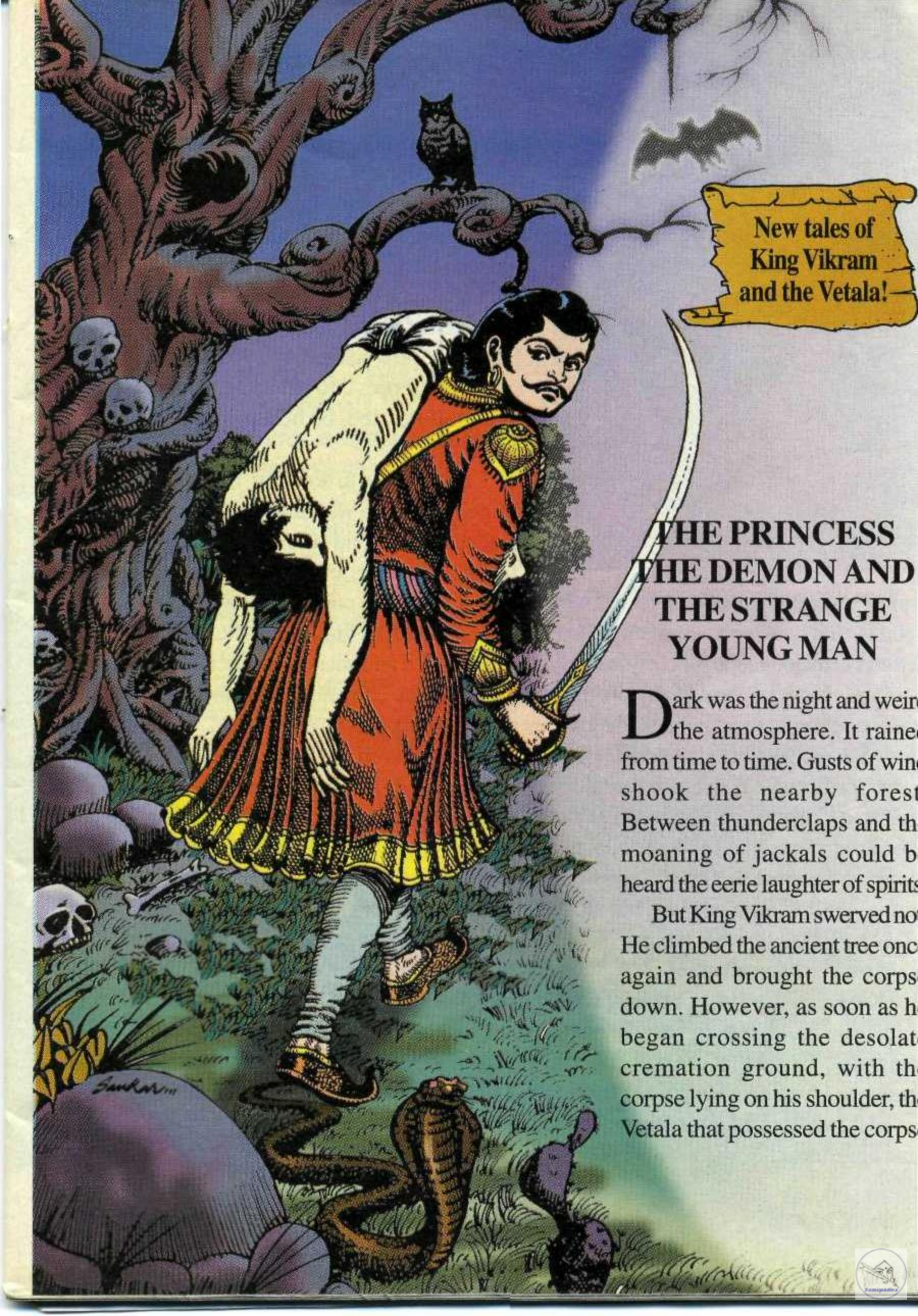
THE UNIVERSE IS ONE HOME

For some people, home is the house in which they live; for others their villages or towns are their homes; there are people who look upon the whole country as their home. There are still others who look upon the earth as their home - *Vasudaiva Kutumbakam*. A highly imaginative person can view the entire solar system as his or her home.



Now the British astronomers have found out that light is coming from a planet outside our own solar system. In other words, our life is influenced by far more remote forces than we know. Indeed, the whole universe is our home!





New tales of
King Vikram
and the Vetala!

THE PRINCESS THE DEMON AND THE STRANGE YOUNG MAN

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Gusts of wind shook the nearby forest. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the Vetala that possessed the corpse



said: "O King, I fail to understand why you should be so very adamant in your efforts to dislodge me from my tree. By the way, have you made any promise to your parents to achieve some goal, as Princess Susmita had done? Have you sacrificed your sleep and comforts for that purpose? I hope you'll not abstain from achieving your goal at a later phase, just as the princess had done. Well, let me tell you her story. That may explain what I mean."

The Vetala went on:

King Chandradip of Chandragiri had only one child, a daughter. She was Susmita. The king brought up the princess like a son. He got her trained in all the skills in which a prince should become adept. The princess excelled

the boys belonging to the nobility in fencing, archery, horse-riding, running, and swimming. However, hunting interested her most.

Her mother, the queen, was worried. No prince would be keen to marry a girl who behaved like a boy. But Susmita would assure her mother that she did not care for the status of her would-be husband. She would marry a young man who would prove to be noble, brave, and kind-hearted, be he a prince or a commoner.

Late in the afternoon one day, Princess Susmita was riding through the forest. Winter had just set in and the forest looked beautiful, with lush green trees and a riot of colourful flowers. She did not feel like hunting. Instead, she dismounted and sat down under a tree, enjoying the chirping of the birds and the murmurs of a brook nearby.

She received a jolt when her horse neighed and she looked towards it. A tiger was about to pounce on her. She swiftly moved away. Even then the tiger managed to clamp its claw on her right arm. There was no time for her to flourish her dagger or fix an arrow to her bow. The tiger was about to leap on her once again. This time, she knew, she would not be able to escape death.

But something miraculous happened. The tiger fell back giving out a piercing and fearsome roar. It had been struck by an arrow.



The princess saw a handsome young man, bow in hand, rushing towards her, before she fainted.

When she regained consciousness, she found herself on a bed inside a hut. Through the window she could see a silver waterfall. She sat up and recollected all that had happened. She was pleasantly surprised to see her arm bandaged in a way which only an expert could have done. Before long her eyes also went to the youth whom she had seen before losing consciousness. He was now preparing some medicine.

The young man had not only saved her from certain death, but had also done his best to nurse her.

"How do you feel?" he asked.

"I feel fine. Is my wound serious?" she enquired.

"No, luckily the tiger missed your neck. The ointment I am preparing should heal you completely in a week's time," the young man answered.

By and by the princess learnt about the young man's mission and life. His name was Kishore. He had lost his father in his childhood. His grandfather who was a dedicated physician, spent much of his time in the forest gathering rare herbs. Taking advantage of the old man's innocence as well as absence, his kinsmen usurped his property. The old man felt disgusted. He left his village and lived in the forest along with his grandson. The tribal inhabitants of the



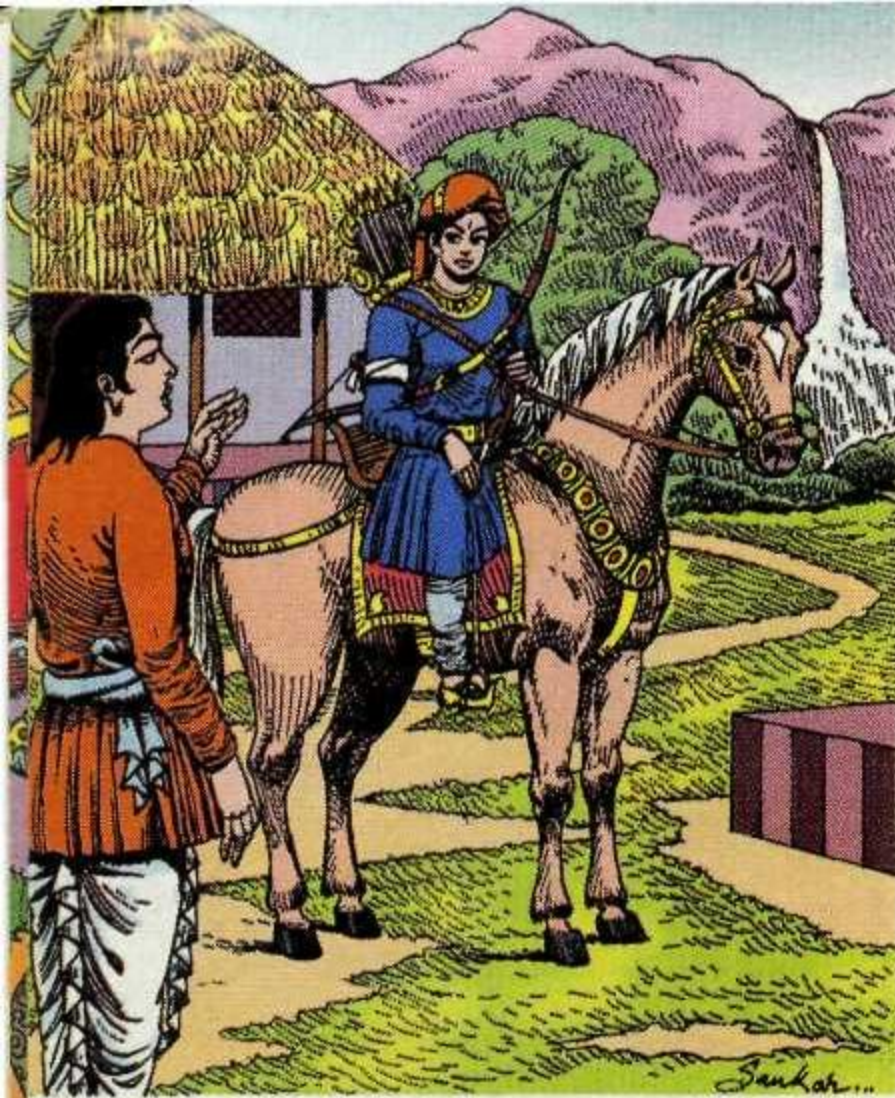
forest found in him their physician and guardian. They adored him. Kishore learnt the science of medicine and treatment from him. After the old man's death, he carried on his tradition. He treated even wild animals and birds when they fell sick or were wounded.

While giving the princess a herbal drink, Kishore asked: "Well, you are a lady. Why were you moving about in the guise of a man?"

"I was on my way to the town in search of a job. I thought it wise to travel in disguise. However, I did not think of the dangers from animals. You saved me. I'll remain grateful to you forever," said the princess.

Kishore gave her a pouchful of medicine and helped her to mount her





horse. "You'll reach the town before sunset even if you ride slowly," he told her.

Back in the palace, Susmita kept thinking about Kishore. How brave, swift, and noble the young man was! It would not be easy to find a character like that among the princes. Why not marry him?

She decided to find out a little more about the man she had begun to admire. This time she put on the dress of a poor village girl and entered the forest, leaving her horse on its outskirts in a woodcutter's courtyard.

She was about to approach the familiar waterfall when she heard a yell of joy. A one-horned demon reached her in a bound and caught her. "I've

got my bride—quite a beautiful one at that!" he exclaimed.

He carried her into a fortress on the top of a hill and locked her up in a room.

All this happened so suddenly that the princess took some time to comprehend the situation. The one-horned demon was too strong and big to be attacked by her hidden dagger. She must apply her wit to save herself from his clutches.

"Don't be afraid of me, my dear, here are some fruits and milk for you. If I were to eat you, I would have already done so. I would rather marry you. Do you know of any auspicious hour coming in the near future?" asked the demon.

"Demon dear, how did you know that I was looking for a bridegroom as much as you were looking for a bride? What a coincidence that we should meet! I'll be happy to marry you but without your horn!" said the princess.

"Don't speak silly! My horn is the only source of my strength. Without the horn, I shall be nothing more than a scarecrow!" shouted the demon.

"You know, there are some limbs which we must have only in pairs like ears, eyes, arms, and legs. Horns belong to the same category. An astrologer had said that if someone has only one of these pairs, he would die the day he marries me," said the princess gravely.



"I see. In which case I might have to go satisfied with merely eating you. But I would have really liked to marry you," said the demon with a sigh.

"Don't give up that hope and settle for something less!" advised the princess. "What about having a pair of horns?"

"My late father's pair of horns is in my possession. But how to fix one of them?" wondered the demon.

"Don't you know Kishore the physician?" asked the princess.

"Who in this forest does not know him!"

"Why don't you request him to plant another horn on your head? He's a great surgeon."

"A good idea. Let me try."

The demon locked the fort and went away. The princess moved inside the fortress and found a heap of gold in one of the rooms. She remembered having heard that this fortress once belonged to a gang of bandits. This demon must have killed or driven them out.

Sometime later the demon returned with Kishore.

"Physician, sir! Kindly endow my handsome would-be bridegroom with a pair of horns!" the princess pleaded with him.

Kishore looked at the princess quizzically. Meanwhile the demon laid before him his father's horns.

"Look here, demon, your present horn must be removed if you're to be



adorned with a pair of horns. The two horns must be situated at two ends of your forehead," observed Kishore.

"But I'll be powerless if you remove my horn!" complained the demon.

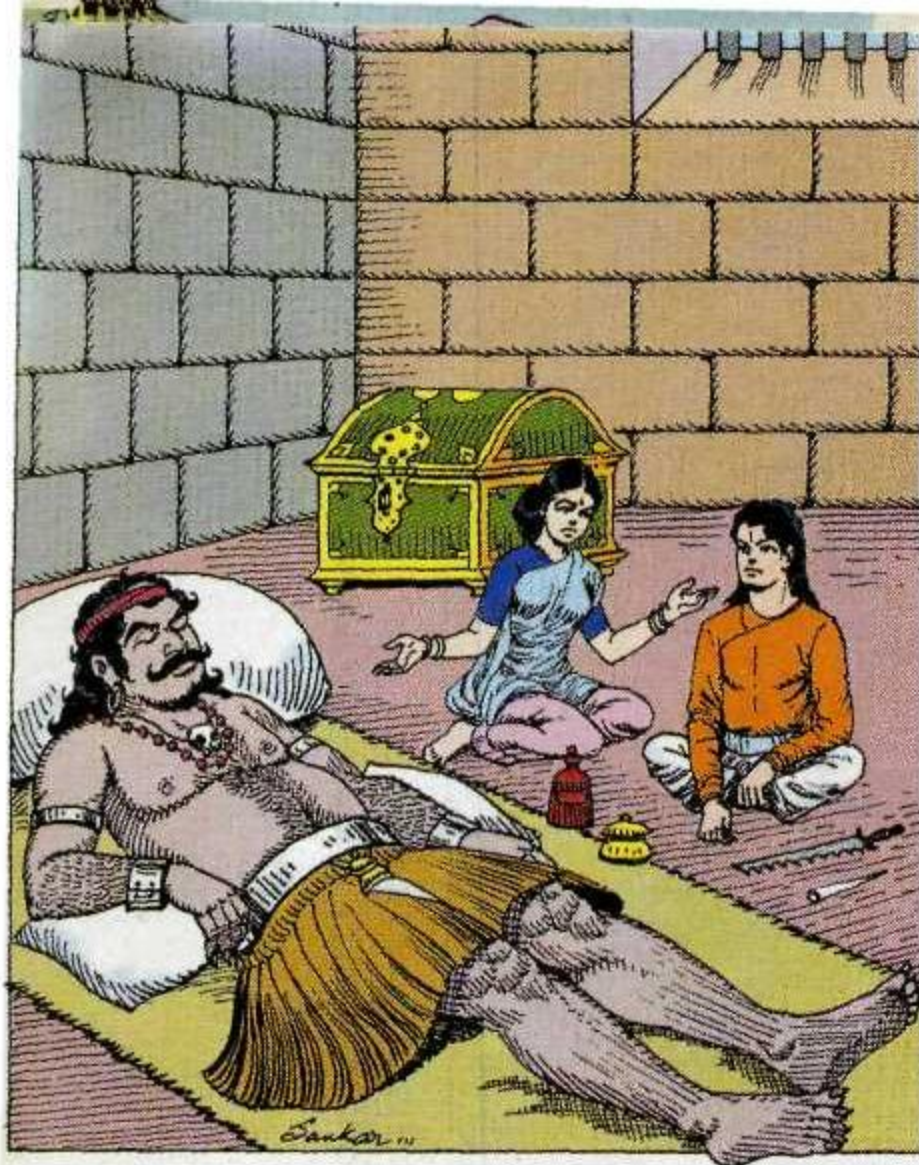
"But you'll become as powerful as your late lamented father the moment you begin to sport his pair of horns!" the princess reminded him.

"That's right," agreed the demon.

Kishore made him lie down. He gave him a drink which made him go into a deep sleep so that he would not feel the pain of the surgical operation. With great concentration Kishore scooped out his horn.

"Stop there!" whispered the princess. "Now he is powerless. Leave him in that condition."





But Kishore did not appear to hear her. He was absorbed in his work.

The princess repeated her suggestion, but in vain. Kishore's concentration was entirely on his delicate work. He was fixing the pair of horns on the demon's head.

The princess almost shrieked and drew his attention to her own arm with the scar. "Don't you recognise me?" she asked.

"Are you the one who was attacked by a tiger? I must say that yours is a strange fancy. You wish to marry a demon, eh?" Kishore sounded amused.

"Who would care to marry this brute? I was only buying time! I say, leave him powerless. Don't fix on him those horns!" said the princess.

"I understand you. But you too must understand me. I'm a physician. My duty or *dharma* is to cure, help, and strengthen the creatures who seek my help, not to weaken them. Should I, while treating a tiger, take out its teeth? That is none of my business. I must keep the trust of my patients. If a physician betrays his patient, he is not a physician, but a ghoul. But don't you worry. I will see to it that the demon does not harass you," said Kishore.

The operation ended and, after a while, the demon woke up.

"Am I endowed with a pair of horns?" he enquired eagerly.

"You are," said Kishore.

"Thanks, I'll give you a basketful of gold," said the demon.

"You need not. Instead, leave this lady to go her way. Give up your intention of marrying her!"

"I've already given it up!" said the demon, laughing. "You see, in our community I was the only demon-boy to be born with a single horn. Everybody made fun of me. That's why I broke away from my home and lived here all alone. Lavangi, the daughter of our chieftain, would have married me. But her parents ignored her wish because I was deformed. Now, I'm sure, they will readily agree to our marriage! I go at once. Do whatever you like with my fortress and my gold."

The demon ran away, singing aloud,



scaring away the creatures of the forest.

"Kishore, make this fortress your lodge. Use this gold to give your patients more comfort. Train some people to help you. I'll remain ever grateful to you for saving me twice. Should you ever be in any difficulty, come to the palace and ask for Princess Susmita!"

Leaving Kishore more perplexed, the princess went away.

The Vetala paused for a moment and then, assuming a challenging tone, asked: "O King, don't you find Susmita's conduct puzzling? If her second visit to the forest was to know more about Kishore, she must have known how compassionate, capable, and truthful Kishore was. She was thinking of marrying him because of his good qualities. Now that she knew about more such qualities, why did she forget her purpose? How is it that she showed no sign of persisting in her plan of marrying him? Speak out if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck."

Forthwith replied King Vikram: "The princess herself was a person of excellent qualities. What was great, she appreciated the value of good qualities. Kishore's goodness lay in his dedicated service to his patients—both human and animal. How many physicians do we meet who have Kishore's idealism and dedication? He was unsurpassed in his own mission. But once he married the princess and became a ruling prince, the forest would have lost its greatest benefactor. He would be forced to give up his *dharma* and his innocence for the sake of administration and diplomacy. There was also no guarantee that he would be successful in his new role. The princess was not selfish. She gave up her design to marry him so that his unique services would be available to those whom nobody else cared. What is more, she wanted him to become known and better-equipped so that others could be inspired by his example."

No sooner had King Vikram concluded his answer than the Vetala, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.



TESTING THE TRUSTED

Vikash worked as a clerk in a small shop owned by Shivsen.

"Vikash, I feel bad because I am unable to pay you the salary you deserve. Bhushan Seth the moneylender is in need of a trusted assistant. He'll pay a better salary. He had requested me to find someone and said he would accept whoever is recommended by me," Shivsen one day told Vikash.

He was not keen to change masters. However, since Shivsen was his sincere well-wisher, he could not refuse to abide by his advice.

Vikash called on Bhushan Seth. The moneylender took a good look at him with piercing eyes.

"Young man, I've to pay a hundred rupees to Shivsen. Will you please go and hand it to him?" he asked.

"I shall, gladly," said Vikash.

When he came back in an hour, Bhushan Seth asked:

"Did you give him the hundred

rupees?"

"Yes, sir," replied Vikash.

"Look here, I had put an extra rupee in that packet."

"I didn't count the money in your presence because that would have meant my lack of trust in you. But I counted before handing over the amount to Shivsen and took out the extra rupee," said Vikash.

"Where is that rupee?"

"I kept it as the price of my labour as your courier."

"But you're supposed to be employed by me!" said Bhushan Seth.

"Sir, my boss had told me that you want a man who can be trusted. You also said you have trust in the capacity of my boss to select the right person. But you put me to a test. This means you neither trusted me nor trusted the man who chose me for you. I'm not accepting the job," said Vikash and went away.





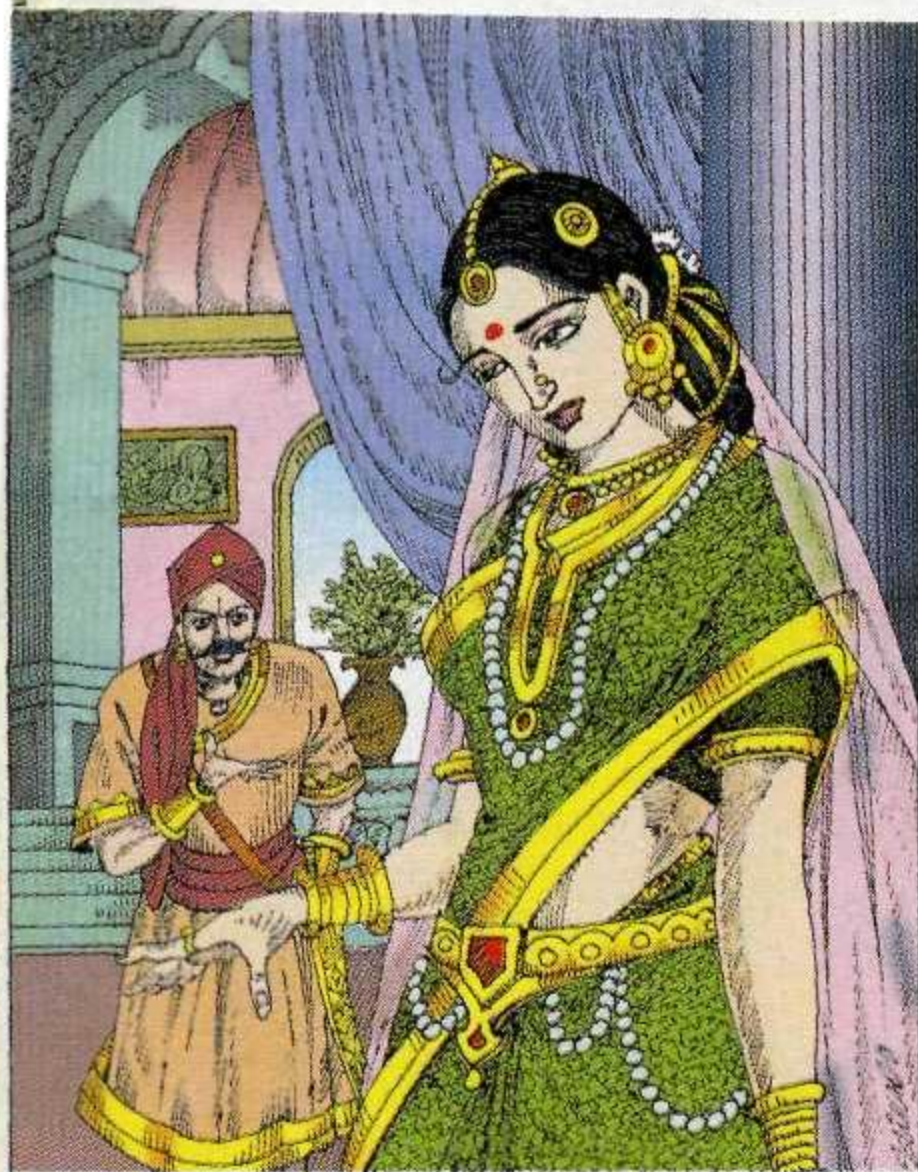
THE GOLDEN THRONE

[The Story so far: Long , long ago, the southern part of India had four kingdoms: Kaundinya, Kalindi, Champaka, and Kunda. The King of Kaundinya, Pourasvata, through war or diplomacy, had made the other three kingdoms subordinate to him. But the situation changed after his death. The subordinate kings became independent. Generations passed. The King of Kaundinya, Sridatta, currently figuring in the story, was especially friendly with the King of Kalindi, Madhavasena. It was understood that King Sridatta's young son, Prince Vijayadatta, would marry Princess Srilekha, Madhavasena's daughter. Maralabhupati, the King of Champaka, coveted the wealth of Kaundinya and his son, Chakrabhupati, was keen to marry Srilekha. Maralabhupati conspired with the other kings and they planned to invade Kaundinya. Madhavasena was sufficiently influenced by Maralabhupati to agree to Srilekha's marriage with Chakrabhupati. But in time Queen Sumati, Madhavasena's wife, who loved Vijayadatta like her own son, secretly despatched Srilekha to Kaundinya. Vijayadatta and Srilekha were hurriedly married.]

King Madhavasena of Kalindi was thunder-struck at the report that his daughter, Srilekha, had mysteriously disappeared from the palace. Greedy that he was, he had already become a party to Maralabhupati's conspiracy against Kaundinya. He had also agreed to give away Princess Srilekha in marriage to Chakrabhupati. In fact,

Maralabhupati and Chakrabhupati were already in his palace. The betrothal ceremony was to take place at an auspicious moment. However, at his new ally the wicked Maralabhupati's advice, he had kept his plan a secret from even his wife, Queen Sumati. But he had underestimated the wit and wisdom of the queen. From the day

3. A QUEEN INTERVENES



Maralabhupati invited her husband to Champaka and showered on him great honours, she had started suspecting Maralabhupati's motive. She also knew her husband's weakness. Maralabhupati had tempted him with the promise of a handsome share in the treasures which they planned to plunder from Kaundinya, besides a big chunk of the kingdom of Kaundinya which they would conquer.

"My friend, the treasures of Kaundinya are our wealth. Our forefathers paid huge amounts of wealth as tribute to King Pourasvata, who had become an emperor. There is nothing wrong in our recovering what our great-great-grandfathers lost to him!" Maralabhupati would thus argue and

Madhavasena would find the argument quite reasonable.

Queen Sumati had employed some spies to find out what transpired between her husband and King Maralabhupati. When she learnt of the conspiracy, she was upset and angry. She had also learnt that Prince Chakrabhupati was an arrogant and selfish young man. She would be the last person to sacrifice her highly sensitive and intelligent daughter to a fellow like that!

She took Srilekha into confidence and disclosed everything. Srilekha sat dumbfounded. "Mother, I would rather die than marry that Chakrabhupati," she said.

"My child, you need not do any such thing. Together we can foil the conspiracy," said the queen. Secretly they prepared for the departure of the princess to Kaundinya.

At last, before the auspicious day, when King Madhavasena broached his proposal regarding Princess Srilekha's marriage with his queen, he was told that the princess was missing!

He did not know what to do. Maralabhupati and Chakrabhupati were already there as his guests. They had planned to march upon Kaundinya soon after the betrothal ceremony!

Sitting in the castle provided to them by Madhavasena, Maralabhupati and Chakrabhupati learnt from their spies that Prince Vijayadatta had been

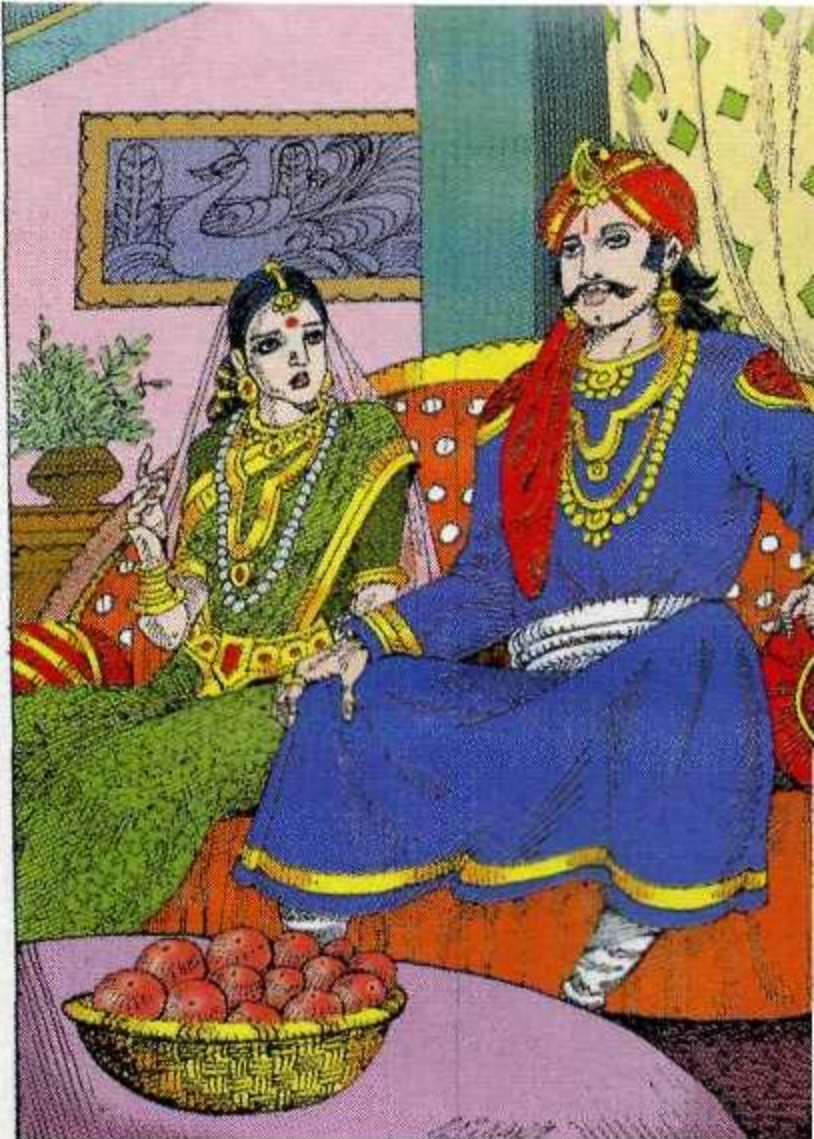


urgently summoned by Sridatta, from his gurukul. This was bad news for Maralabhupati and his son, because they knew Vijayadatta to be highly intelligent and brave. They would have liked to attack Kaundinya when he was away in the gurukul.

"We should attack Kaundinya as soon as possible, before Vijayadatta and Sridatta get enough time to prepare for their kingdom's defence." He sent a message to Madhavasena accordingly. He did not know what to do. Before long, secret news reached him that his daughter was in Sridatta's care! To attack Kaundinya would mean endangering his daughter's life.

He was also afraid of Maralabhupati's mood. Maralabhupati had befriended him for gain and also because Chakrabhupati desired to marry Srilekha. Once he came to know that Srilekha had escaped to Kaundinya, would he excuse him? Suppose he did not mind it and still remained his friend and together they defeated King Sridatta. What after that? Why should Maralabhupati care for him after his purpose had been served? The situation would have been different if Srilekha had married Chakrabhupati.

In other words, he would lose the friendship of Sridatta as well as of Maralabhupati! Any king could crush him thereafter! Who knows if Maralabhupati himself would not

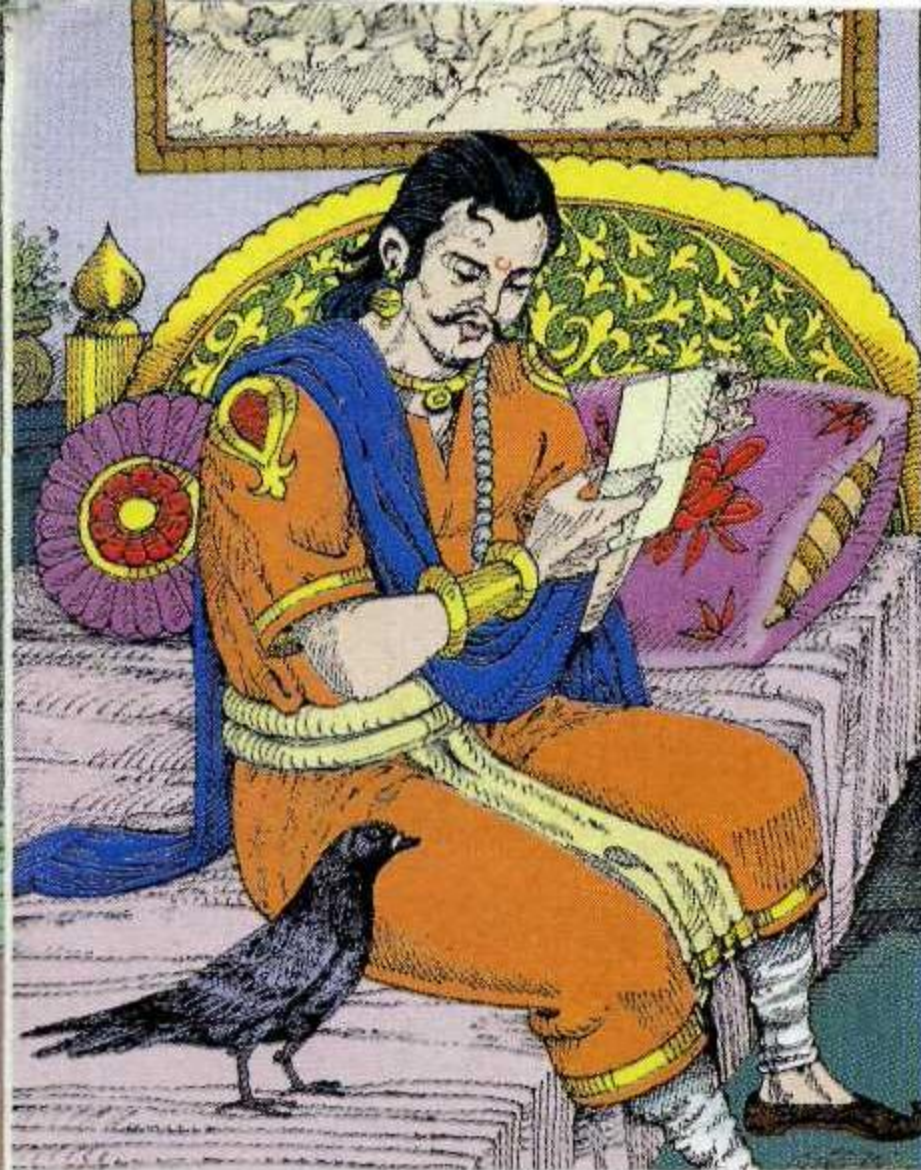


behead him because of his son's failure to marry Srilekha?

It was at this hour of anguish that Queen Sumati stepped into his room and began to give him courage. "Forget what you have done under the wicked Maralabhupati's evil influence. It is never too late to correct oneself. Now, I'm sure that if any prince deserves to be crowned as emperor, commanding the allegiance of all the kings of this region, it is only Vijayadatta. Chakrabhupati does not merit even the position of a servant of Vijayadatta. Under Vijayadatta's command, the army of Kaundinya is bound to defeat the armies led by Maralabhupati," the queen said confidently.

"But by this time Sridatta and





Vijayadatta must have begun to hate me! How can I stop them from becoming our enemies?" wondered King Madhavasena.

"Be straight. Tell them that as Srilekha is with them, you have nothing but goodwill for them. Send your blessings for Vijayadatta and Srilekha. Send the message through a pigeon. That will be safer and faster," advised Sumati.

Madhavasena accepted the advice. The queen said again: "The treacherous Maralabhupati, who is out to plunder and destroy a kingdom which had done him no wrong, deserves to be taught a lesson. Instruct our army secretly to suddenly attack Maralabhupati's army before they attack Kaundinya. Pressed from one side by the Kaundinya army

and from the other side by your army, Maralabhupati's forces would be routed. Vijayadatta and his father may feel confused for a moment, but they will soon appreciate your gesture."

King Madhavasena smiled. "Indeed, I had been blinded by the cunning Maralabhupati and his son. You've opened my eyes. I'll send the message immediately." By now he had shed his fear and remorse.



The tender rays of the morning sun had just begun to fall on King Sridatta's bed on an upper floor of his palace when a lovely pigeon flew into his lap with a message tied to its neck. Exchange of messages between Kaundinya and Kalindi was frequent and some pigeons had been trained for that duty.

With some anxiety, Sridatta opened the folded paper. He was overjoyed. He summoned Vijayadatta and Srilekha and handed it over to them.

Vijayadatta was all smiles. "Father! I was eagerly expecting such a change of heart to take place in Uncle Madhavasena's heart! After all he loves Srilekha and Auntie Sumati loves me!"

"The day augurs well for us. Let's see what comes out of the digging operation," said King Sridatta.

The three got ready soon and went to the site at the eastern side of the palace. The digging was to begin under Rajguru Sivananda's supervision.



In an atmosphere of solemn silence the Rajguru made a circle and poured some holy water at its centre. Sixty labourers started work immediately. The work continued till noon. The king, the prince, and Princess Srilekha remained at the site till then.

In the afternoon the Rajguru sent a message to the king and the prince to hurry to the site. They stood speechless at what they saw on their arrival there. The pit was quite wide and deep. Inside was seen a long dark serpent, coiled but had its hood raised. It looked like a giant statue, though it was alive.

The Rajguru led the king and the prince aside and said: "I had a vision of this serpent while I was in meditation. This is not an ordinary serpent, but an occult or magical one. In olden days, people who buried a good deal of wealth created such serpents by the help of Tantriks. Such serpents guard the hidden wealth. They act as they are instructed by their creators."

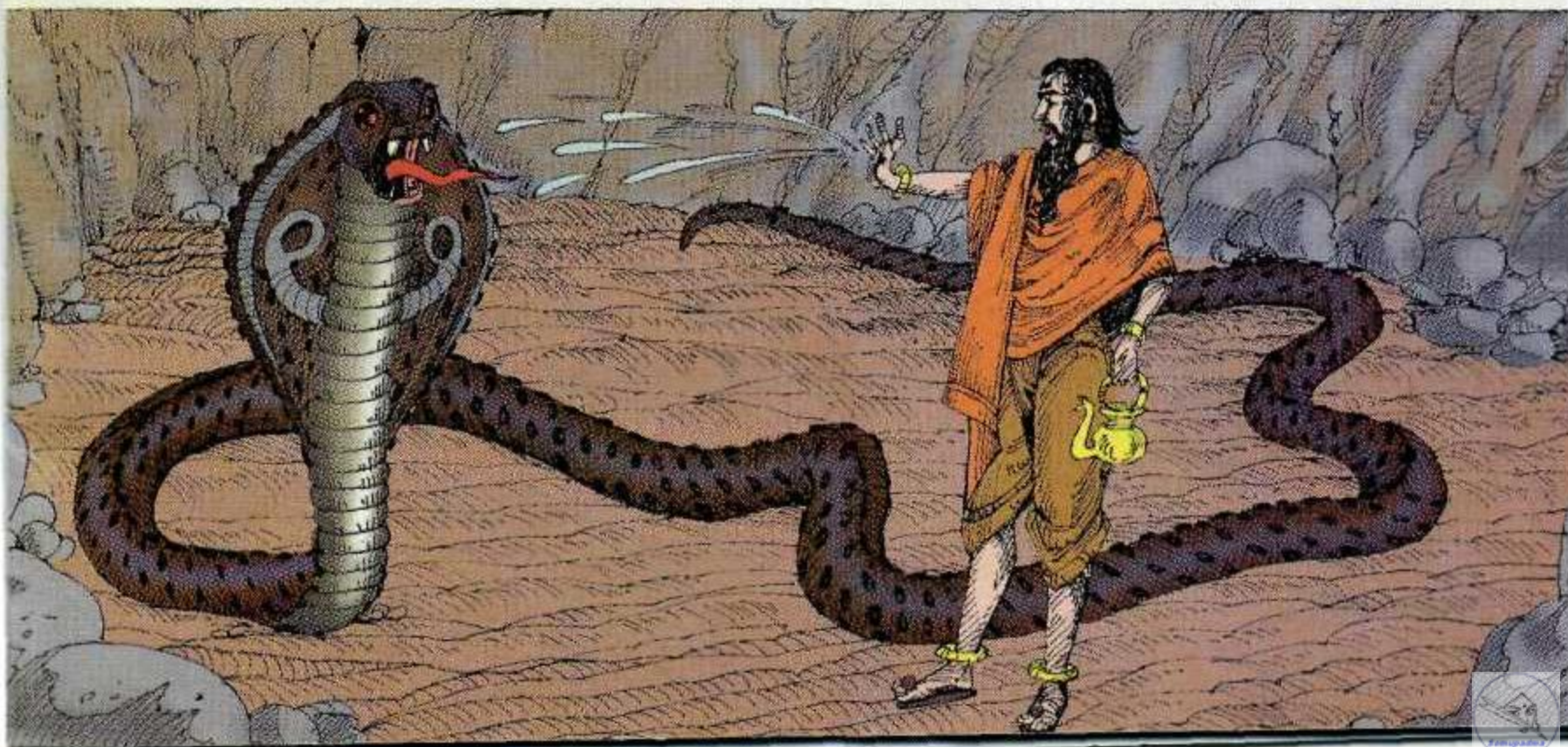
"Strange!" commented the prince.

"Strange indeed," agreed the Rajguru. "We had just resumed digging in the afternoon when, with a terrific hissing sound, the serpent emerged. The workers climbed up and came out of the pit at once. The serpent breathed out hot air. It was unbearable. I went near and felt the air and was convinced that it was an occult serpent. Only then did I send the message to you asking you to come here."

"How to drive away or put an end to this fearsome guard?" asked the king.

"Such formations are dissolved by a certain Mantra. But in case the treasure the serpent is guarding is meant for a particular person, it will go away only when that person orders it to do so. It will not heed to anyone else's command. Let's hope for the best," said the Rajguru. Turning to Vijayadatta, he added: "My noble son! Be prepared to face the serpent, also for any unexpected situation that may arise!"

[To continue]





A COMPANION IN THE WILDERNESS

Little Gopal's mother was a poor widow. Her husband had left for her a small plot of land. She raised some vegetables on it.

She had a spinning wheel. A village trader supplied her cotton. She spun yarn for him and, for her labour, was given some rice.

She maintained her son and herself somehow with such meagre means.

She had only two loves, her deity – Krishna, whom she called Gopal—and her son Gopal. She treated her deity in the same way as she treated her son.

She coaxed both of them to eat, to sleep when it was night, so on and so forth.

Gopal began going to school. The mother looked forward to the time when he would be able to read out the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* for her.

But Gopal faced a problem. Between his home and the school lay a stretch of wilderness, quite dense with trees at places and absolutely lonely. A fear crept in his heart when he passed through it.

“My son, you've an elder brother



If there is merit in a person it will shine of itself. It is not by swearing that the fragrance of musk is proved.

-Samayochita Padyamali



who lives in the forest. He, too, is named Gopal. Whenever you are afraid, call him aloud. I'm sure, he would respond and give you company," one day the mother told Gopal.

"I never knew that! What does he do in the forest, all alone?" Gopal queried.

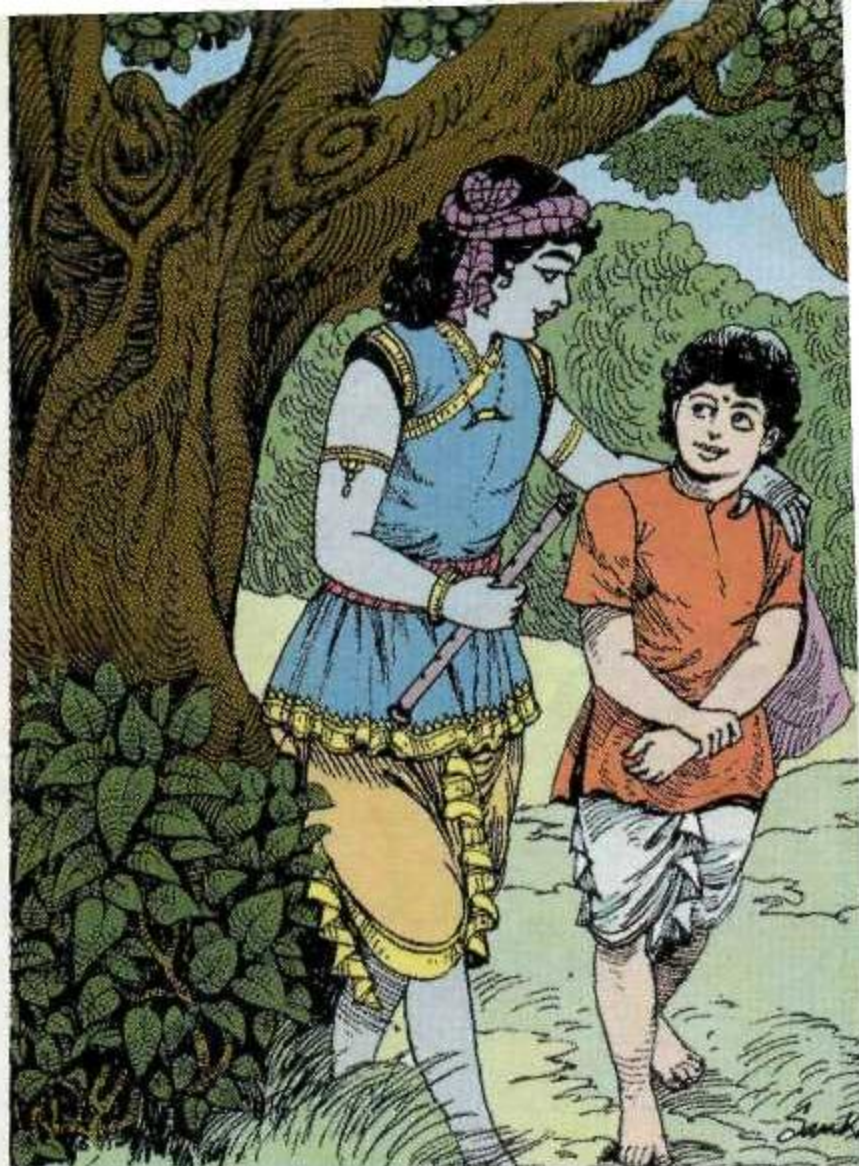
"He looks after his cattle and plays his flute!" said the mother.

Next day, while passing through the forest, Gopal remained alert so that any sound from a flute did not escape his ears. Indeed, he could hear the sound, at first very faint and then growing more and more distinct. He had never heard anything more melodious.

"O Gopal-*bhai*! I'm your younger brother, also called Gopal. Where are you? It's lonely in the forest, and I'm scared! Why don't you give me company?" shouted Gopal.

He heard a giggle and, before long, a boy, a bit older than he, sprang up before him. Little Gopal took an instant fancy for the older Gopal and the latter escorted him out of the forest.

"I keep rather busy. So call me only when you are really scared," advised the older Gopal.



"I don't think I'll ever again feel scared now that I have known you. I will always remember you..."

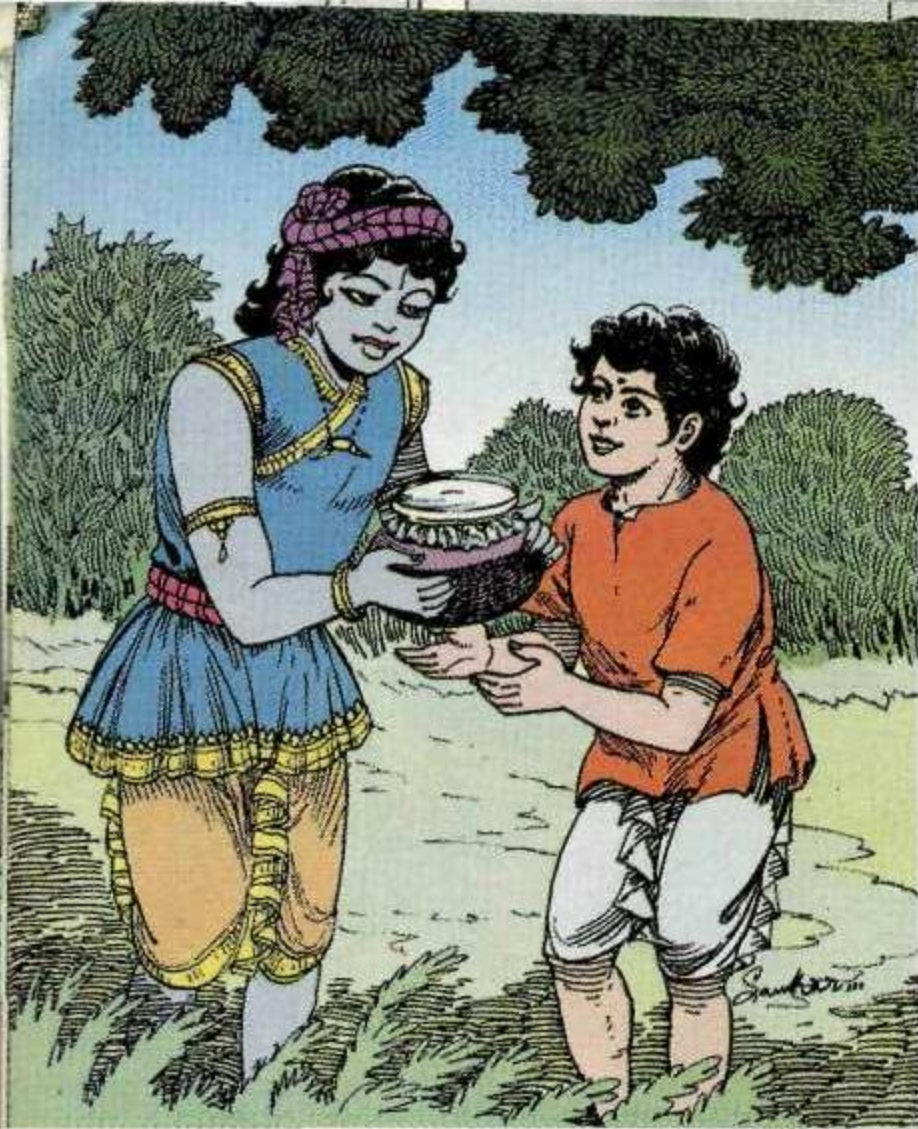
"That would do!"

"But even if I am not afraid of crossing the forest alone, won't you appear before me from time to time so that we could play together?"

"Not a bad idea. Indeed, I very much love to play," said the older Gopal.

So, from time to time Gopal would shout for his namesake and he would emerge from the dusky interior of the forest and they would play.





Gopal would report to his mother all about his new-found companion and the joys of playing with him. She would shed tears of gratitude, hiding her face from her son and murmur out her thanks to her deity.

One day, the teacher was performing the funeral rites of his father. It was customary for the students to offer him whatever they could on such occasions.

Gopal knew that there was nothing his poor mother could give him for the teacher. So, he did not broach the matter with her. Nevertheless, he was sad, for he would be the lone boy to meet the teacher empty-handed.

“Why do you look sad?” the older Gopal asked him when they met in the forest. Little Gopal told him his problem.

“I’ve a potful of milk with me. Take it to your teacher,” said the older Gopal, fetching the pot from some hidden spot.

Little Gopal was delighted.

At the school the students offered to their teacher the different gifts they had brought – coconuts, rice, bananas, jaggery. Some of them gave him money.

At last came the shy little Gopal’s turn. The teacher, after receiving the pot from him, poured its contents into a larger vessel. But as soon as he had done so, the pot in his hand got filled up again. He poured out the milk, and when he looked into the pot, it was brimful again.

The miracle was about to throw the teacher into a swoon. With a tremendous application of will-power he managed to retain his poise. However, he carried the pot hurriedly into a room before anybody else could know about the phenomenon, and called Gopal in and asked him where he got the pot from.



Gopal told him about his occasional adventures with his namesake and the teacher had enough sense to understand who the other Gopal was.

“My child, wouldn’t you lead me to your brother in the forest?” the teacher asked Gopal imploringly.

“Why not, sir!”

Gopal led the teacher into the forest and shouted for his brother to appear before them, but in vain. A long time passed. The teacher was in tears.

That embarrassed the little Gopal and he shouted out this threat to his brother: “If you don’t appear before us, I will never – never again – play with you!”

And then he heard the older Gopal’s voice: “But I also play with you as much

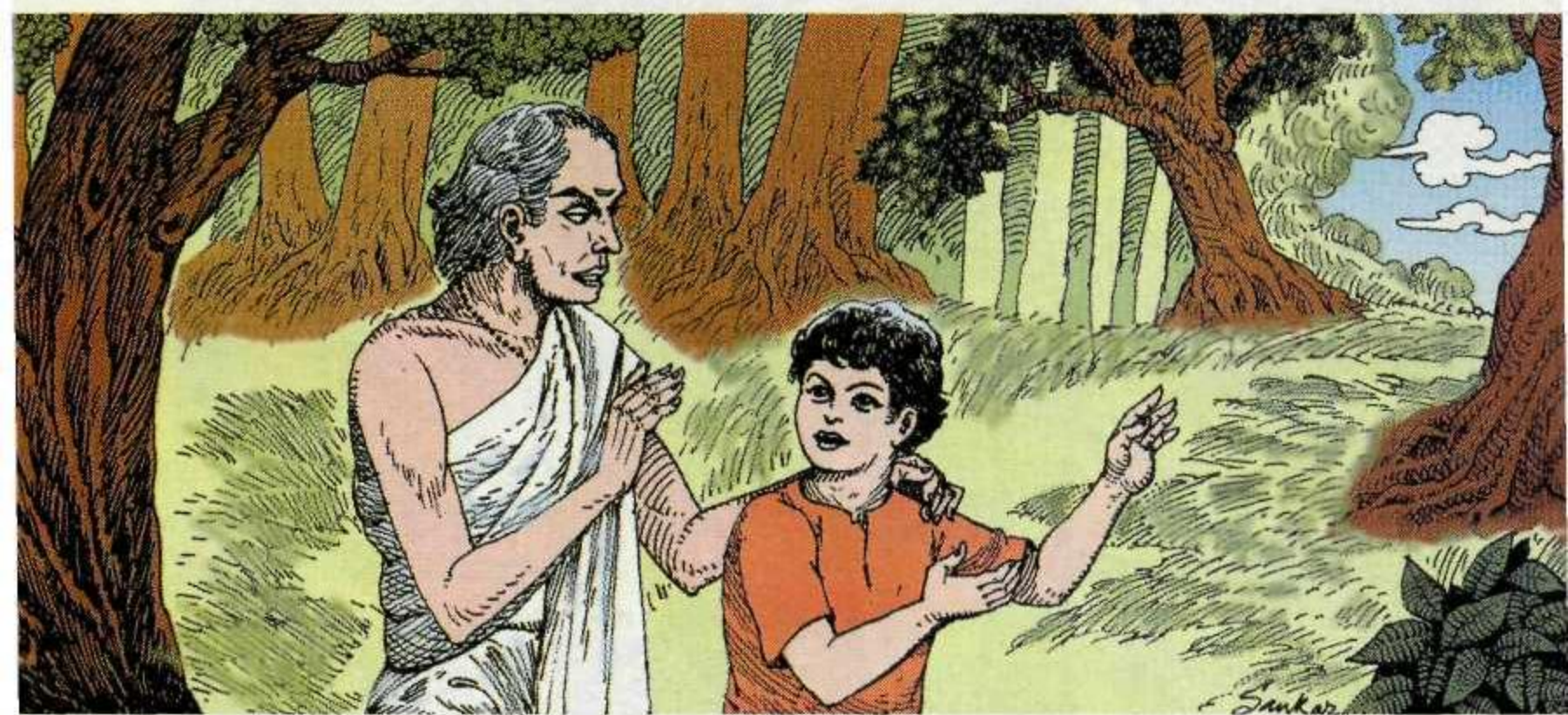
as you play with me. Must you deprive me of my joy for no fault of mine? Tell your teacher that I appreciate his curiosity, but it is not yet time for him to see or hear me. He must wait – and I assure him that he will achieve his wish one day – when he is truly ready for it!”

“Sir, did you hear him?” Gopal asked his teacher eagerly.

“No!”

“No? But I heard him so distinctly!” said Gopal and he narrated what he had heard word by word.

Breaking into sobs, the teacher said: “That is enough for me, my boy. I have been promised a boon! Great is your mother’s trust and unique is your love and innocence.”



THE SCHOLAR'S KINDNESS

Suresh, the only son of Mahesh Chandra of Gawarpur had completed his studies successfully, but could not find any employment.

As days passed, the young man felt bored. However, Mahesh Chandra was never tired of giving him hope.

One day, the father and son were on their way to a relative's house when they happened to meet Ram Sharma, a well-known scholar, who was a courtier of the king but had retired.

"How are you, Mahesh?" Ram Sharma asked when Mahesh bowed to him.

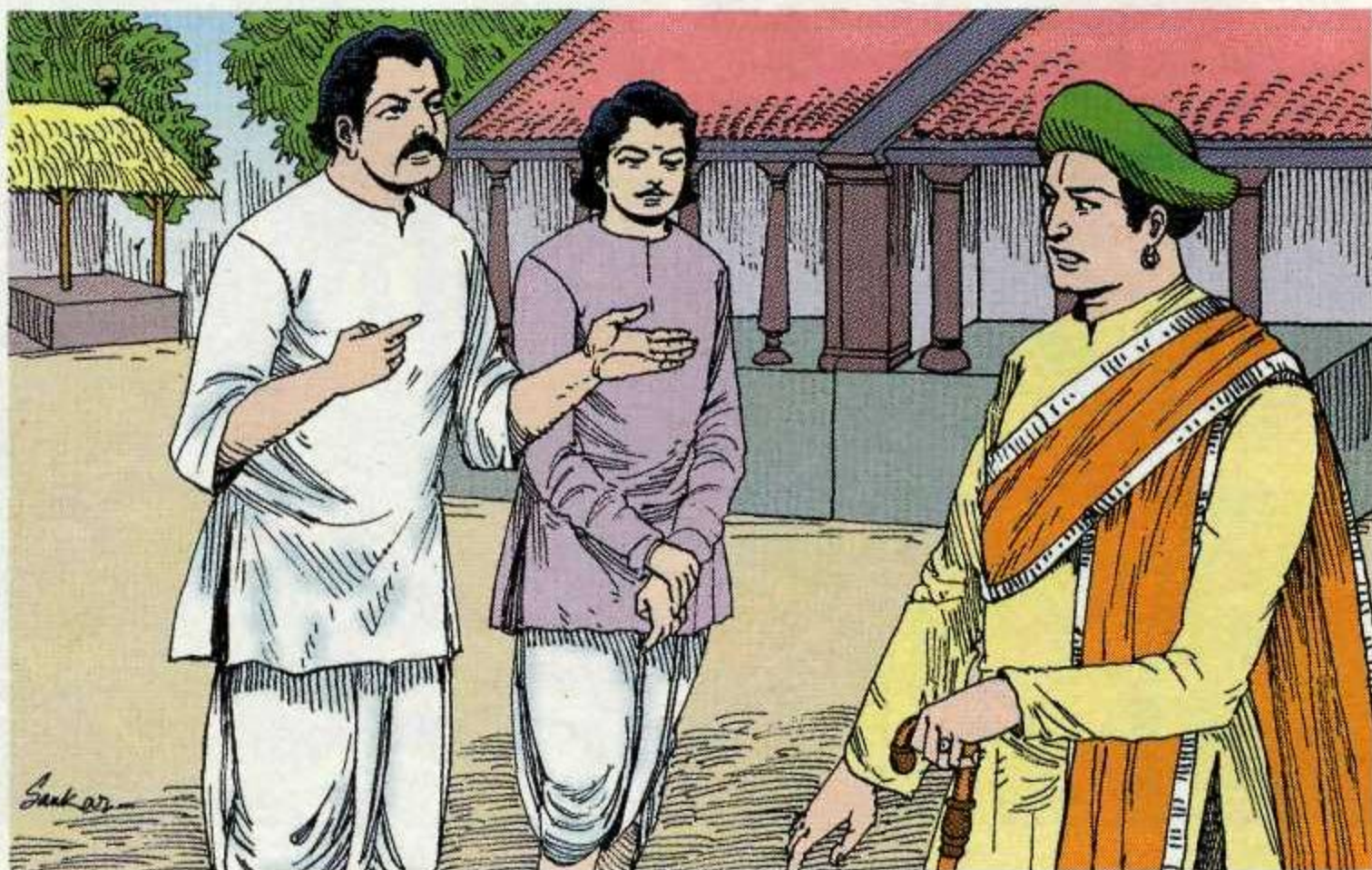
"I am well, with the blessings of my well-wishers like you. But, my misfortune is, despite his merit, my son remains unemployed. There was a time

when just a word from you would have ensured him a job in the government. The king held you in great esteem. Alas, time has changed. How much I wish that my son had got himself qualified a few years ago!" said Mahesh Chandra.

Ram Sharma nodded, but said nothing.

The very next week Suresh was informed that he had been appointed to a suitable post in the royal court.

"I expected this," said Mahesh Chandra told his son "Having known Sharma, I was almost sure he would prove that the king hold him in esteem even after he had retired and that his recommendation would not be turned down!"





THOSE WHO **REVIVED** THE TIGER

Long, long ago there were three young friends who lived in the *ashram* of a guru.

The guru had many disciples and he taught them many things; but what the three friends loved most was the art of performing miracles. The guru had a stack of manuscripts which explained the art of magic. Whenever they found a chance, they read them avidly.

Sometimes, in the dead of night, when everybody was asleep and all was quiet, they would gather the necessary articles and practise their voodoo.

“Boys, try to be good, try to be wise, try to seek the truth in all things. Why waste your time and talents dabbling in magic and miracles? They would never lead you anywhere near your goal,” the guru told them time and again.

But the guru’s warning fell on deaf ears. By and by, the three friends learnt to perform a variety of miracles. They were amazed at their wonderful achievements.

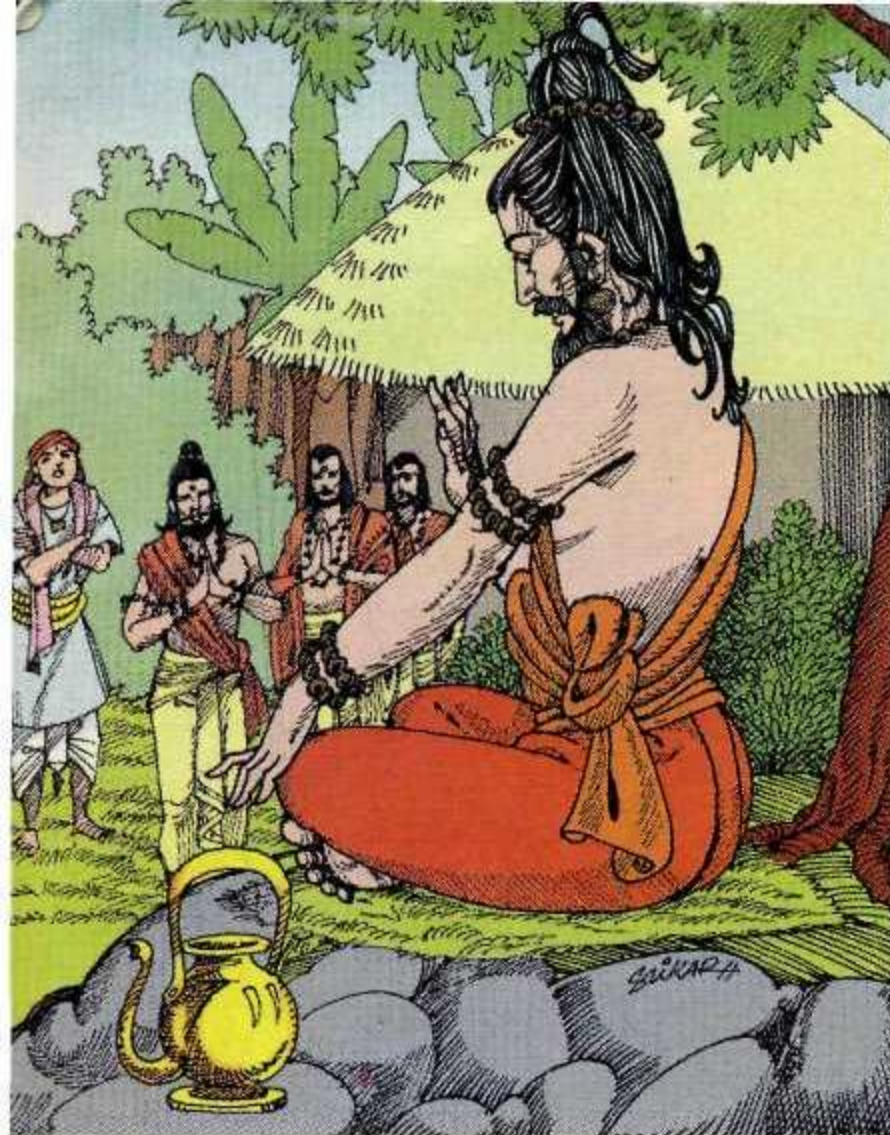
“The whole world ought to have a taste of our power. Why don’t we go out and dazzle the people with our magic?” proposed one of them.

The other two were taken up with the idea. “Yes, yes, let’s do so,” they supported their friend.

“Please allow us to tour the region,” they pleaded with the guru, standing before him with folded hands.

“I’m afraid the time is not yet ripe for you to wander all by yourselves!” said the guru.

“Why! Aren’t we grown-up enough for that? Please don’t refuse us the



permission, O guru, for, we're quite capable of taking care of ourselves. You'll soon hear people praising us. And to be sure, as we grow in fame, you too would not be forgotten, for we'd not hide the fact that we're your disciples!" assured the three boys.

"Don't bother about giving me any credit," advised the guru. "If go you must, take our Bhola with you. Look upon him as one of your brothers. And pay heed to his counsel should he give any."

Now, Bhola was an illiterate chap who served the guru. The three scholars did not relish the idea of taking him along as their companion. But the guru had already given his orders with an air of finality.

They soon set forth on their journey. "We are on our way to fame," said one. "And wealth too," said another. "Who knows if we'd ever return to the ashram? The world might very well make gurus of us!" said the third.

They talked of the secrets they had learnt—how to sprout a pair of wings on a frog, how to change a piece of rope into a serpent, how to tame the imps and make them dance. Occasionally they cast a look of contempt at Bhola. He walked silently behind them, carrying their bags.

The road wound through a forest. It was noon. They chose the cool shade of a huge tree to sit down under and ordered Bhola to cook their food. Bhola got down to work.

After eating the friends were in no mood to pass their time idly. One of them saw some crumbled bones scattered around the tree.

"Let me bring these bones together and make a complete skeleton out of them!" he proposed enthusiastically.

And he lost no time in chanting a certain incantation and sprinkling a little water on the bones. Lo! and behold the disjointed bones came together. They made the skeleton of a tiger. The beast, when alive, must have been big enough to fight a lion.

They were agog with excitement. They danced around the skeleton and sang their own glory.



"I can endow it with flesh and blood!" announced the second friend.

On hearing all this, Bhola stood up, looking aghast. "Don't act like fools!" he shouted at them.

But who would listen to him? Only a few birds tittered and flew scurryingly away.

The second friend chanted another *mantra*. To their great amusement, the skeleton grew into a robust carcass.

"Do you wish to see what I can do?" asked the third friend. And gleefully he shouted out the answer himself. "I can breathe life into it!"

"Do so by all means! It'll be such a charming pet!" exclaimed the other two.

"Don't, for heaven's sake," cried out Bhola. "Don't forget that you have promised to win fame for yourselves and our guru. Let's leave the carcass here and proceed to the locality. You can perform your miracles in front of crowds who will appreciate them."

"The tiger, once restored to life, will feel so grateful to us! How wonderful it'd be to see it behaving before us like

a dog, wagging its tail and licking our feet. People would be amazed! We'd be looked upon as gods!" the friends continued to exclaim, in total disregard of all that Bhola had said.

Bhola looked for a tall tree. He climbed it as soon as he had found one. He had just reached its top when he heard a lusty roar.

Yes, the third scholar had breathed life into the carcass and the tiger had just stood up. It yawned and stretched its limbs. Then it looked around and gave out yet another roar, more lusty and terrific.

Before long its roving eyes fell on the three friends. Instantly it sprang upon them. It was easy for the beast to do so, for the scholars stood huddled together, shivering like reeds in the wind.

The scholars were crushed under the beast in no time. It sat on them and devoured them with what seemed to be a century's hunger.

Bhola was back in the ashram by evening. When the guru heard his report, he shook his head sadly. "How unfortunate!" he sighed.





OPERATION MOUTH

Long, long ago there was a king who had a good minister. Never had a king known a wiser minister.

The ageing minister told the king that it was time for him to retire. He must devote his last days dozing and snoozing.

It so happened that the minister had three young sons, all of whom looked equally bright and dutiful.

"If retire you must, my dear friend, then let me choose one of your sons to succeed you. It should be the eldest one, I suppose; what do you say?" the king asked his minister.

"That depends, my lord, on what you expect of your minister. If you want a daredevil, my eldest son, no doubt, should serve you well. If you want a clever man for the position, your choice should fall on my second son. And if you wish to have a man of truth, my youngest son should suit the post best," replied the minister.

"How can you be so precisely sure about the characters of your sons? Can you prove that your opinion about each of them is correct?" demanded the king.

"I can, my lord," replied the minister.

"Really? I should like to see you prove it," said the king, becoming rather curious.

"Very well, my lord," said the minister after a pause. "I shall give one instruction to all the three. Let us see how each follows it," said the minister.

He then summoned his sons into his presence. The king watched them from a hidden alcove.

"Listen, my sons," said the minister in a tone that was as grave as a tiger's growl. "At the centre of the royal garden stands a very special rose plant. I want each of you to go and pluck one rose from it. Take your task seriously. I should warn you of one danger though. Plucking flowers from that particular plant is strictly forbidden. If you are



caught, you ought to be able to escape punishment by using your mouths – yes – your mouths.”

It was twilight. The sons bowed to their father and took leave of him. They entered the garden and stealthily approached the plant. But no sooner had they plucked the roses than they were caught by some alert guards.

The eldest son at once gave out a piercing cry and bared his teeth in a bid to bite the hand of the guard who had caught him. The frightened guard loosened his grip, allowing the young man to make good his escape.

The second son threw the rose into his mouth and pretended innocence.

But the youngest son remained calm and let himself be led to the king.

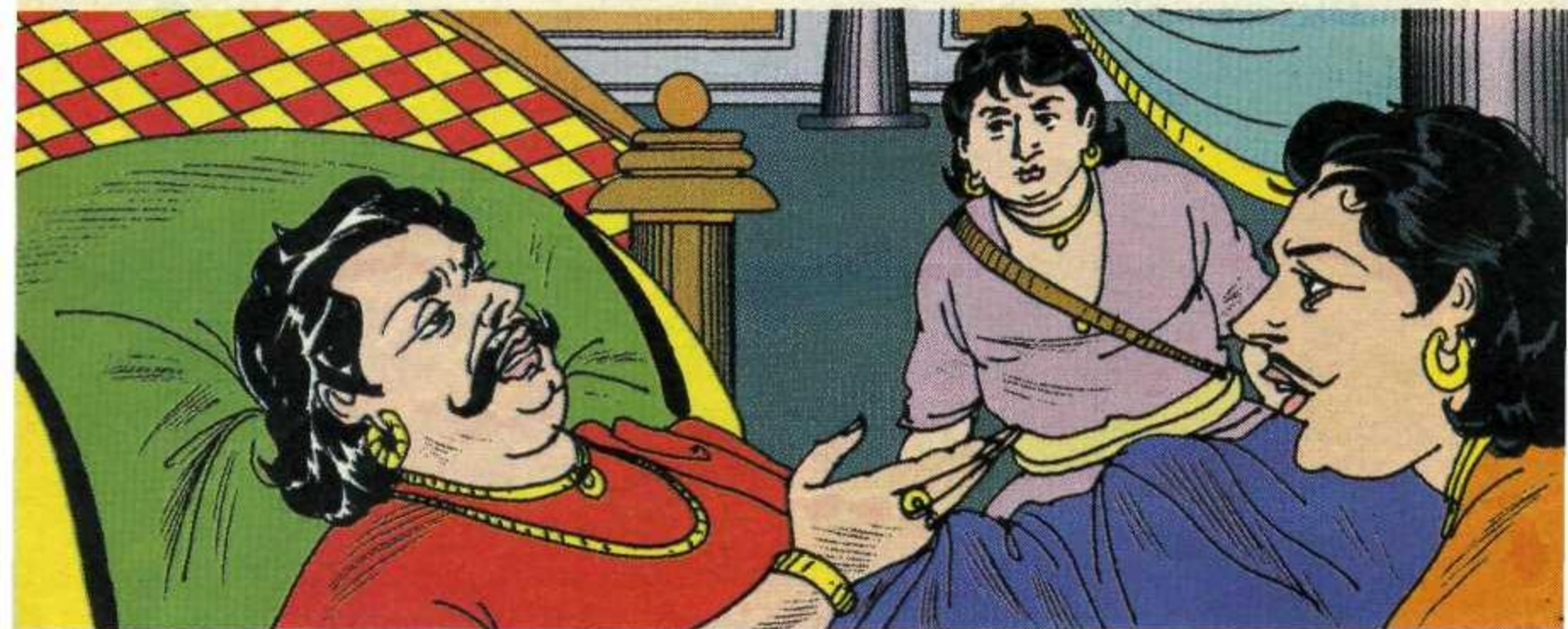
“I know, your majesty, that it was a forbidden plant. But I had no doubt in

my mind about one thing: had you known that it was your wise minister who had asked me to pluck the flower, you would realise that there must be some very sound reason behind it,” the youngest son told the king.

“See, my lord,” said the minister, “each of the three, when caught, has used his mouth, for I had instructed them to do so. But each one did so in his own way, according to his nature. One used it violently, one used it cleverly, and one has used it truthfully.”

The amused king smiled and said, “Right, my dear minister, but all three are worthy in their own ways. Your eldest son can become an officer in the army and the second one can serve as my adviser. But the youngest son, the wise one, should step into the position you're leaving.”





PROSPERITY THROUGH MIRACLES

Long, long ago, the kingdom of Varnapuri was ruled by King Yashdev. He was a good man, but a weak ruler. However, it was a time of peace, and everything went on well. He knew some wonderful secrets, but he had neither any zeal nor any need to make use of his knowledge.

While on his death-bed, the king called his two sons and said: "At the northern end of the forest which is not far from our town, there is a solitary reddish hill. At its western side there is a gorge. At the centre of the gorge stands a small shrine of Goddess Kali. Under the throne of the deity lies a plank. If you remove it, a passage will open before you. The passage leads to a dark dungeon. On its floor is kept a basketful of rice. If you bring it and scatter the rice on any ground, they will

change into thousands of soldiers. You can conquer the neighbouring countries and become very powerful. But you must feed the soldiers properly. The moment they are hungry, they will change into rice."

"This is amazing!" commented the two princes.

"I'll reveal to you something more amazing. You will find before the deity a stone vessel. If you bring it to the palace and ask for food, it will continuously churn out delicious food and it will go on and on," said the king.

"Exciting. Is there anything else?" asked the princes.

"Indeed, there is, my boys!" said the king. "If you bow down to the deity and then bring the sword she holds to the palace, there will be plenty of rain over



our kingdom. This you can do if ever there is a drought."

When the king died, the elder prince ascended the throne. That year the monsoon failed and there was a drought. The people were in great distress. The young king proudly announced that he would bring down rain. Accompanied by a battalion of soldiers, he proceeded towards the Kali temple. But a terrible dry wind swept away his soldiers and he found himself pushed back into his palace. He heard a shrieking voice saying: "I am the spirit of the drought. I will not let you succeed!"

The young king gave up!

At night his younger brother rode all alone to the temple and brought the sword. As he did not announce his action, the spirit of drought which lay fast asleep, could not check him.

There was rain as soon as the sword reached the palace and the people were happy. They found out the secret and praised the younger prince. Once the spell of drought had been broken, the prince restored the sword to the deity.

This annoyed his elder brother, the king. "I can perform far greater miracles," he said. He went into the temple and brought the stone vessel. Delicious items of food—of unlimited quantity—began to be brought out by the magic vessel. People continuously carried home free food and ate it happily.



One day, the king set out to find out how happy his subjects were. He was accompanied by his senior minister. To his surprise he saw cattle and other domestic animals roaming the streets famished and uncared for. Roads and ponds were dirty. The corn-fields were filled with bushes and shrubs. There was no sign of activity anywhere!

On enquiry he was told that the people did nothing except receive free food, eat merrily, and sleep. They had no need of animals or corn fields or anything else!

"My lord, if any ambitious king comes to know about our condition, he will easily conquer our country," whispered the minister.



"Let us conquer all the neighbouring kingdoms before anyone does any such thing!" said the king. He went into the temple and brought the rice basket. As soon as the rice was scattered on the ground, thousands of soldiers stood up.

"March to the east and annex the neighbouring kingdom," was the order given to them. They had just reached the frontier when they felt hungry. At once they disappeared—transformed into rice!

"I'm tired of all this!" shouted the king. "Nothing succeeds in my hands! Better I offer the kingdom to my younger brother and live a quiet life—eating good food and enjoying dance and music."

"Not a bad idea, my lord," said his minister.

Steps were taken accordingly. The younger prince was crowned the king.

"Let us, my lord, again begin our

expedition against the neighbouring kingdoms. If we plan well and make proper use of the magic vessel, we can feed the soldiers on time and there will be no problem," advised the ministers.

"Enough!" the new king snubbed them. "I do not want to usurp the kingdoms of others. Let's restore the deity's vessel and the rice-basket to the shrine. We will use the deity's sword only when there is drought. We will use the rice-basket to create soldiers only when we are attacked. We will use the magic vessel only when there is a famine. Use of unnatural methods to satisfy our whims will make our people an idle, good-for-nothing lot. We must live as human beings; think and toil and make progress through thinking and toiling. Otherwise we will be no better than vegetables!"

The new king saw to it that everybody grew active again and life was normal.



HABLA TO THE RESCUE OF THE MOON

Young Habla was as good-natured as a lamb, and as smart as a calf. When an idea for action came to him, he did not give a second thought to it, but acted instantly.

He saw some anglers in his village regularly hooking fish from the lake. That inspired him to catch a fish or two. He made a fishing rod, but was afraid of using it in front of others lest he failed to catch any fish and became a laughing stock. So, he decided to try his hand at night.

It was a moonlit night. As he was proceeding towards the lake, he happened to pass by a well.

'A fish is a fish whether it is from a lake or from a well. Better I begin with the well,' he thought and leaned over the well and looked into it. What naturally attracted him was the reflection of the moon.

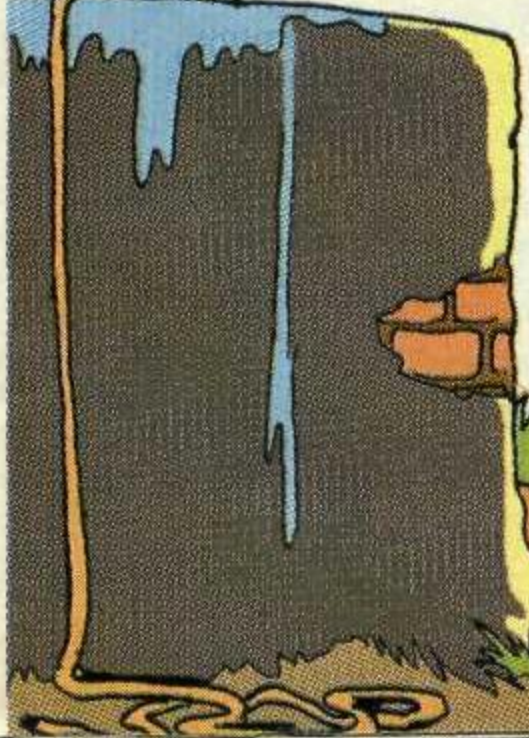
'Good God! How did this happen to our old good moon? How could it fall into the well?' he wondered and decided to rescue it.

He threw the line of his fishing rod into the water intending to hook the moon and lift it. The hook got stuck at the rocky bottom of the well. He pulled the rod applying all his force and, when the hook got released, he fell flat on his back.

The moon was shining over him.

"Thank God! One pull and the moon got catapulted right into the sky!" he said congratulating himself.

His only regret was, nobody witnessed his feat; **nobody** would know how he had rescued the moon!





*Glimpses of a great civilisation –
its glorious quest for Truth through the ages.*

Saga

3. THE DESCENT OF GANGA

"Is that true?" Jayashree, mother of Sandip and Chameli, exclaimed. The joy in her voice was tinged by some surprise.

"It is true, mother but, to be honest, one who really stood first in the essay competition was not I but Grandpa!" explained Sandip. "There were three topics: The character you admire most in Indian history, the character you admire most in Indian mythology, and the character you admire most among the people you know. I chose the second one and wrote on Nachiketa. What the judges liked most was my interpretation of the story. When the sage told Nachiketa 'Go to Yama', he was not uttering a curse, but was actually asking his brilliant son to meditate on the mystery of death. Nachiketa arriving at Yama's abode and waiting for three days and three nights meant that Nachiketa meditated on the mystery of death for three days and three nights. That was how I explained the story."

"Well, Sandip, I did not know that the story of Nachiketa had such a meaning!" said Jayashree.

"If great wisdom had not been presented as stories, they could have been forgotten. At the same time, if such stories have continued to circulate for

hundreds, nay, even thousands of years, that is because they carry great wisdom," observed Grandpa Chowdhury, coming out of his room.

"Grandpa! Are you going for a walk? I shall give you company," said Sandip enthusiastically.

"So will I!" It was Chameli, clapping her hands and leaping into the drawing room.

Soon, the three were on the river-bank.

"We live on the banks of a river which is a branch of the Ganga, isn't that so? Why is the Ganga considered so very sacred?" asked Professor Chowdhury.

"I know, I know!" said Chameli. "Because the Ganga flows by several holy places, such as Rishikesh, Haridwar, Varanasi, and"

"Tut, tut, Chameli! It could be the other way round! These cities are holy because they are on the banks of the sacred Ganga!" rejoined Sandip.

"Don't try to be smart!" snubbed Chameli.

"I need not try. I am smart – I mean smarter than you!" retorted Sandip.

"Come on, my children! Both of you are smart – smarter than I!" said the professor. "The river is sacred not



f India



because of the holy sites on its banks, nor are the sites sacred only because of their situation on the banks of a great river. Both have their own reasons to be sacred. Let me first know the reasons which the river Ganga has."

"Please go on," said Chameli.

"Chameli, didn't I say that I wish to know about it? It is for you to tell me about it," Grandpa Chowdhury reminded them.

"But we don't know!" responded Sandip.

"Try to find out!" said Grandpa. "If you don't know, your friends should know or your teacher! Tell me tomorrow what you've been able to gather."

Grandpa Chowdhury, however, did not disappoint the children since they had come out with him in the hope of listening to something interesting. He told them about the two longest rivers in the world – the Nile and the Amazon, and how the source of the Amazon was discovered only in the year 1971 by Loren Melntyre, an American explorer.

"How could men be so ignorant about one of their greatest rivers?" asked a surprised Chameli.

"We know very little about many things. The problem is, man is too proud to admit that. Nature was there long,

long before man was created. She had built up her own harmony. Man has demolished mountains, played with the course of rivers, without knowing what the consequence of such actions would be. But our ancients looked upon mountains and rivers as gods and goddesses. There were sages who believed that there were conscious beings behind such Natural phenomena. But a common man's belief that they were gods and goddesses served a great purpose. People treated mountains and rivers with reverence," said Grandpa.

"But how did that attitude change?" queried Sandip.

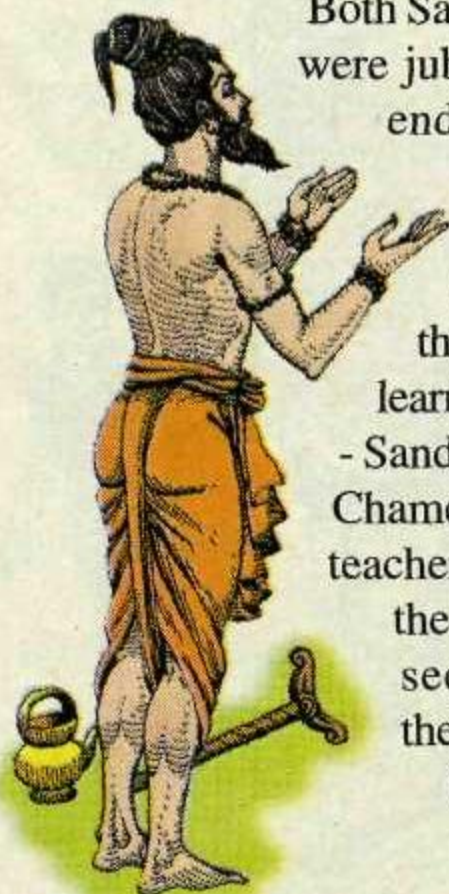
"Man grew more and more utilitarian. All that mattered to him was his



immediate interest. Anything that brought him pleasure, anything that satisfied his vanity, was important for him. Man today is contemptuous of his past, careless of the future generations. He is polluting the atmosphere, rapidly destroying the good old forests, exploiting the rivers and other natural resources."

The three returned home, Sandip and Chameli looking very grave. Grandpa Chowdhury's gloomy portrayal of man's unnatural conduct towards Nature had made them very pensive.

"But I'm hopeful, my children, that your generation will be wiser than that of mine and of your father's generation. But for building a bright future, you must understand the past. I expect you to tell me about the Ganga tomorrow."



Both Sandip and Chameli were jubilant when, at the end of the next day, they met their grandpa in his study. Both of them had managed to learn the story of Ganga - Sandip from a book and Chameli from one of her teachers. They narrated the story, sharing the sequences between them.

Once upon a time,

long long ago, there was a king named Sagara. He decided to perform a Yajna - known as the Aswamedha. That required him to allow a horse to wander. If it returned after roaming the earth, without being detained by anybody, he could proclaim himself the King of kings.

But one day, the horse disappeared mysteriously. Much

search did not yield any result.

Since it was not found anywhere on the earth, the king ordered his sixty-four

thousand sons to look for it in the

nether world. They dug through the earth's surface and arrived at a sphere where they found the lost horse tied to a pillar near a sage who was meditating. They accused him of stealing their horse. The angry sage's curse reduced them to ashes!

Needless to say, the sage was innocent. Indra, the King of gods, had played a trick on Sagara.

The sage was none other than Kapila, a man possessing great supernatural powers. King Sagara could not do anything to nullify the curse. Nor could





his successor and grandson, Ansuman – not even Ansuman's son, King Dilip.

It was Dilip's son, Prince Bhagiratha, who became determined to undo the terrible curse. He passed a long time doing some penance. Then he approached sage Kapila and prayed for the resurrection of his grandsires.

Kapila was pleased with the young prince, but bringing life back to the sixtyfour thousand princes out of a heap of ash was not going to be easy. The only way the impossible could be possible was to bring the sacred Ganga, which flowed in heavens, down to the earth and make it roll over the ashes!

Lord Brahma was the custodian of the Ganga. Sitting at the foothills of the Himalayas, Bhagiratha deeply meditated on Brahma and prayed to Him to allow the Ganga to descend on the earth. Brahma was moved. He agreed to grant the prayer. But could the earth bear the impact of the celestial descent?

At Bhagiratha's prayer, Lord Shiva agreed to absorb the shock of the mighty fall, standing on the earth. The Ganga first descended on his head and, slowly, came down to the ground and meandered through the rocks towards the plains.

Prince Bhagiratha, blowing a conch-shell, led one of the several streams of the Ganga into the nether world. The heavenly surge of water rolled over the ashes of his forefathers. At once they sprang to life!

Sandip and Chameli concluded the story and Sandip said: "The Ganga is sacred because it was a river from the heavens and also because it could revive the Sagara princes."

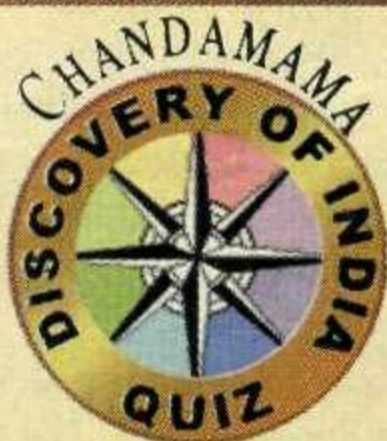
"I congratulate you both for the way you narrated the story. However, there is yet another legend, not so widely known, which tells us about the very origin of the Ganga, before its descent on the earth. The sanctity of the Ganga can best be appreciated only in the light of that legend. But meanwhile do not forget that these legends are symbolic. The dead coming back to life under the flow of the heavenly Ganga means the Divine Grace washing away the curse of death."

"What about the legend of the Ganga's origin?" asked Chameli, holding on to Grandpa.

"Next time, my sweet child!" said Professor Chowdhury.

-Visvvasu
(To continue)





Answers to February Quiz

1. Goswami Tulsidas and Vilvamangal.
2. a. Balarama is Abhimanyu's maternal uncle
b. Ugrasena is Pradyumna's great-grandfather.
c. Ghatotkacha is Sisupala's nephew.
d. Parikshit is grand-nephew of Kichaka.
e. Karna and Subhadra are cousins.
3. i) *Charaka Samhita* by Charaka, who lived in the 1st century, during the era of King Kanishka.
ii) *Susruta Samhita* by Susruta, who is believed to have lived in the 2nd century, if not earlier.
iii) *Rajatarangini*, a chronicle of the kings of Kashmir, written by Kalhana, who lived in the 12th century.
iv) *Arthashastra* by Kautilya (Chanakya), who lived in the 4th and 3rd century B.C.
v) *Natyashastra* by Bharatamuni, who lived between 2nd century B.C. and A.D. 1st century.

Creative Contests

CHANDAMAMA

INVITES ITS READERS

to participate in creative exercises of their imaginative-ness and quest in the following fields.



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST

1. For the Photo-caption contest page, budding photographers can send a pair of pictures, both related to each other in some way. The photographer's own explanation of the relationship must accompany the submission.

For the selected photographs (pair),
the reward is Rs. 500.

Photos can be submitted any time.



2. Readers can submit an anecdote or an experience of their own or a story (old or new) which will explain a proverb or a phrase announced by your magazine, in 150-175 words. Please remember that your submission must have a story element in it, but not the original story from which the proverb is derived.

**The proverb for this month is:
"Honesty is the best policy"**

For the selected submission, a reward of
Rs. 500 will be given.

Submissions must reach by the end of March 2000 and the winning piece will be published in the June 2000 issue.

Address your entries to:

CHANDAMAMA CREATIVE CONTESTS,
CHANDAMAMA BUILDING, VADAPALANI, CHENNAI-600 026.



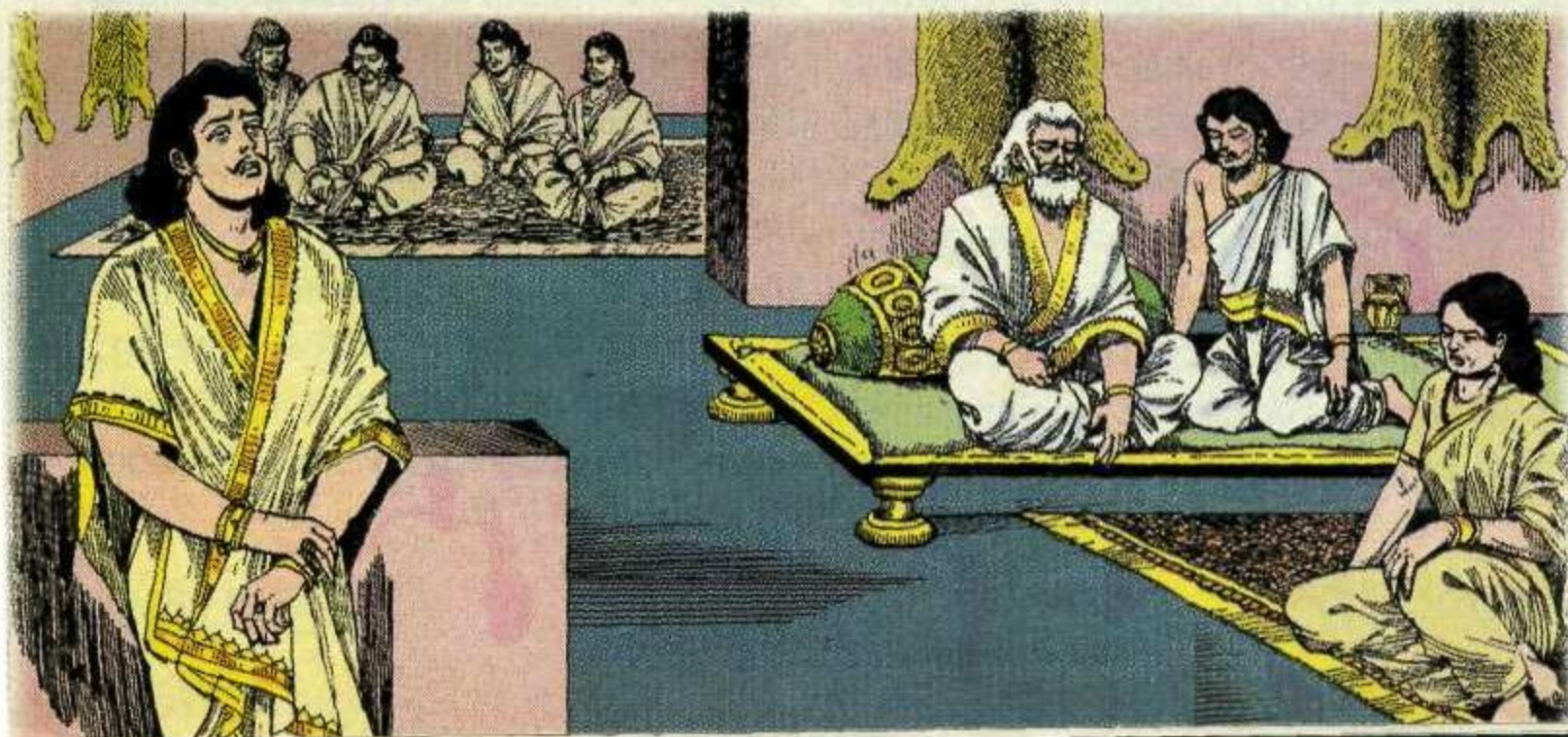
STORY OF THE MAHABHARATA

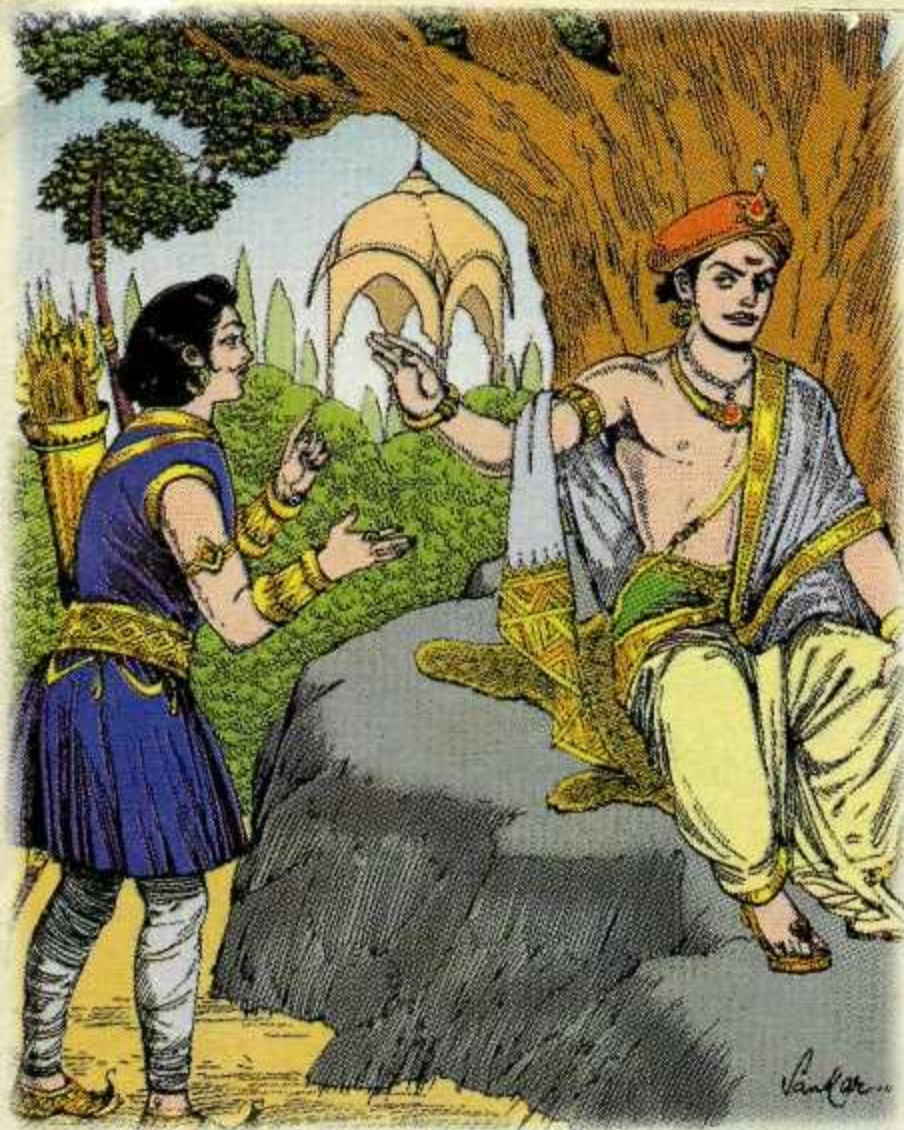
(The story so far: The battle raged for long, and the eighth day saw the fall of Irawatha, son of Arjuna, while Bhima's son, Ghatothkacha, wrought havoc among the Kaurava ranks. Duryodhana was desperate. Karna suggested that he be given the command of the Kaurava army. When he heard of this move, Bhishma was angry. He said he was willing to lay down his life on the battlefield. On seeing Sikhandi in front of him, Bhishma remembered his vow and dropped his bow. Arjuna's arrows pierced his armour and the patriarch fell down. Arjuna raised him on a bed of arrows. Karna assumed command of the Kauravas. His end came when Arjuna's arrow struck him as he knelt to pull out his chariot stuck in the mud. On the eighteenth day, the war came to an end. Duryodhana hid himself in a pond. Bhima taunted him to a fight which ended in Duryodhana's death. Dhritarashtra who had lost all his sons in the war, was persuaded by Lord Krishna to accept the Pandava princes as his sons.)

After the Kurukshetra war was over, the Pandavas gathered on the banks of the Ganges. They paid homage to their kinsmen who had laid down their lives in the battle. They remained in mourning for a month when they lived in huts outside the city.

Many people came to greet Yudhishtira. Among them were Vyasa and other sages, as well as noblemen. Yudhishtira received them with

courtesy. "Krishna, Bhima, Arjuna and other heroes have brought me victory. But I don't consider this as a victory at all. I've killed my own kinsmen; we've lost Abhimanyu. How can I cherish the throne and the kingdom which have come to me through such tragedies? While we were praying for the departed souls, my mother revealed to me that Karna was our own brother. I fail to





understand how this giant of a hero met his doom!”

Sage Narada explained the curses that had brought about Karna’s fall: Karna was learning archery from Drona, when he became envious of Arjuna who showed great skill in archery. He was also jealous of Yudhishtira who excelled everybody in intelligence, of Bhima for his prowess, of Nakula and Sahadeva for their nobility, and of Krishna for his friendship with Arjuna. That was why he sided with Duryodhana.

One day, Karna met Drona secretly and said: “O guru! You’re surely not partial to anyone, are you? Well, I very much wish to defeat Arjuna one day. Will you teach me the secret of

Brahmastra?”

Dronacharya, who had a soft corner for Arjuna, said: “Don’t you know, Karna, that the secret you seek can be disclosed only to either a Brahmin or a Kshatriya? You’re, after all, the son of a mere charioteer!”

Karna, though humiliated, was not discouraged. He proceeded to Mahendragiri where lived the mighty Parasurama. “Revered sir, I’m a Brahmin boy. I offer myself as your humble pupil. Please allow me to serve you and learn from you.” Parasurama accepted him. Karna soon became an adept in the art of using many weapons and also recalling them at will.

Once Karna was wandering along the seashore close to the *ashram* of his master, when his eyes fell on a cow which he had killed with an arrow. Later he learnt that it belonged to a Brahmin and had been offered for a certain religious rite. He rushed to him and apologised. But the Brahmin was not to be appeased easily. He cursed Karna: “Just when you are fighting hard, your chariot will get stuck in a pit. You’ll then die a helpless death just as has happened to my poor cow!”

Karna continued to serve Parasurama faithfully and learnt from him the secret of Brahmastra. But something strange happened. One day, Parasurama was enjoying a nap with his head resting on Karna’s lap. An



insect crawled up and stung Karna's thigh. But he did not cry or stir lest his guru's sleep was disturbed.

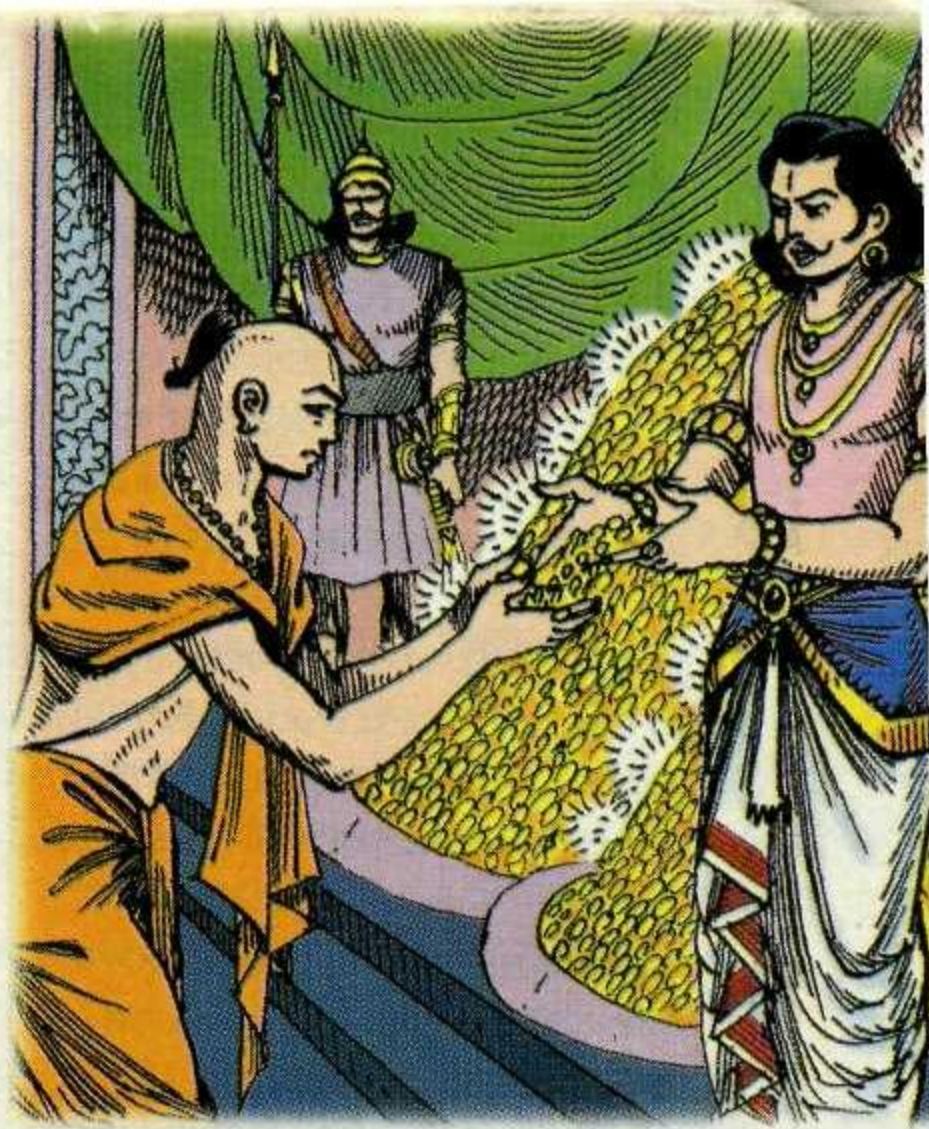
When Parasurama woke up, he saw blood oozing from his disciple's thigh, and also the insect. He looked at Karna sternly. "Such patience cannot be expected of a Brahmin. Tell me the truth, who are you?"

Karna confessed that he was not a Brahmin, but only the son of a charioteer. An angry Parasurama cast a curse on him, that he would forget the *mantra* for using Brahmastra just when he would need it most.

In spite of these curses, Karna grew into a unique hero. When the daughter of King Chitrangada was forcibly taken away by Duryodhana and hundreds of princely suitors tried to stop him, Karna alone, on behalf of Duryodhana, defeated them all.

Even the indefatigable Jarasandha was defeated by Karna when he was offered the city of Malini as a gift. Indra, afraid of the growing might of Karna, met him in disguise and asked him for a gift of the charms and talismans which protected him. Karna obliged Indra. All these factors had combined to bring about his fall in Kurukshetra, said Narada.

Yudhishtira listened to Narada and sighed: "War swallows up so many bright youths! Accursed is the life of a Kshatriya. How much have I sinned



for the sake of a kingdom! I've no mind to enjoy it. Arjuna! You rule over the domain. Let me go on a pilgrimage."

Arjuna, angry and agitated over Yudhishtira's words, said: "We've done nothing except to discharge the sacred duty of Kshatriyas. Now that we have achieved the goal after so much of toil and trials, do you want to become a mendicant? If that was what you had in mind, where was the need to carry out a massacre? Won't people laugh at your instability? Don't forsake the kingdom. Let us perform the *Aswamedha yaga* and be released from all sins."

Bhima supported Arjuna. "We should not insult the code of conduct by which we Kshatriyas are bound.



Why show any mercy to the cruel and the unjust? We have moved heaven and earth for the triumph of Truth. Should we, after digging a well, refuse to benefit by its water? O king! Banish such unworthy thoughts from your mind and give due attention to the affairs of the state."

The sages, too, advised Yudhishtira to give up all remorse from his mind. Vyasa said: "On the battlefield, even if you happen to kill a man well-versed in the scriptures, you won't be a sinner."

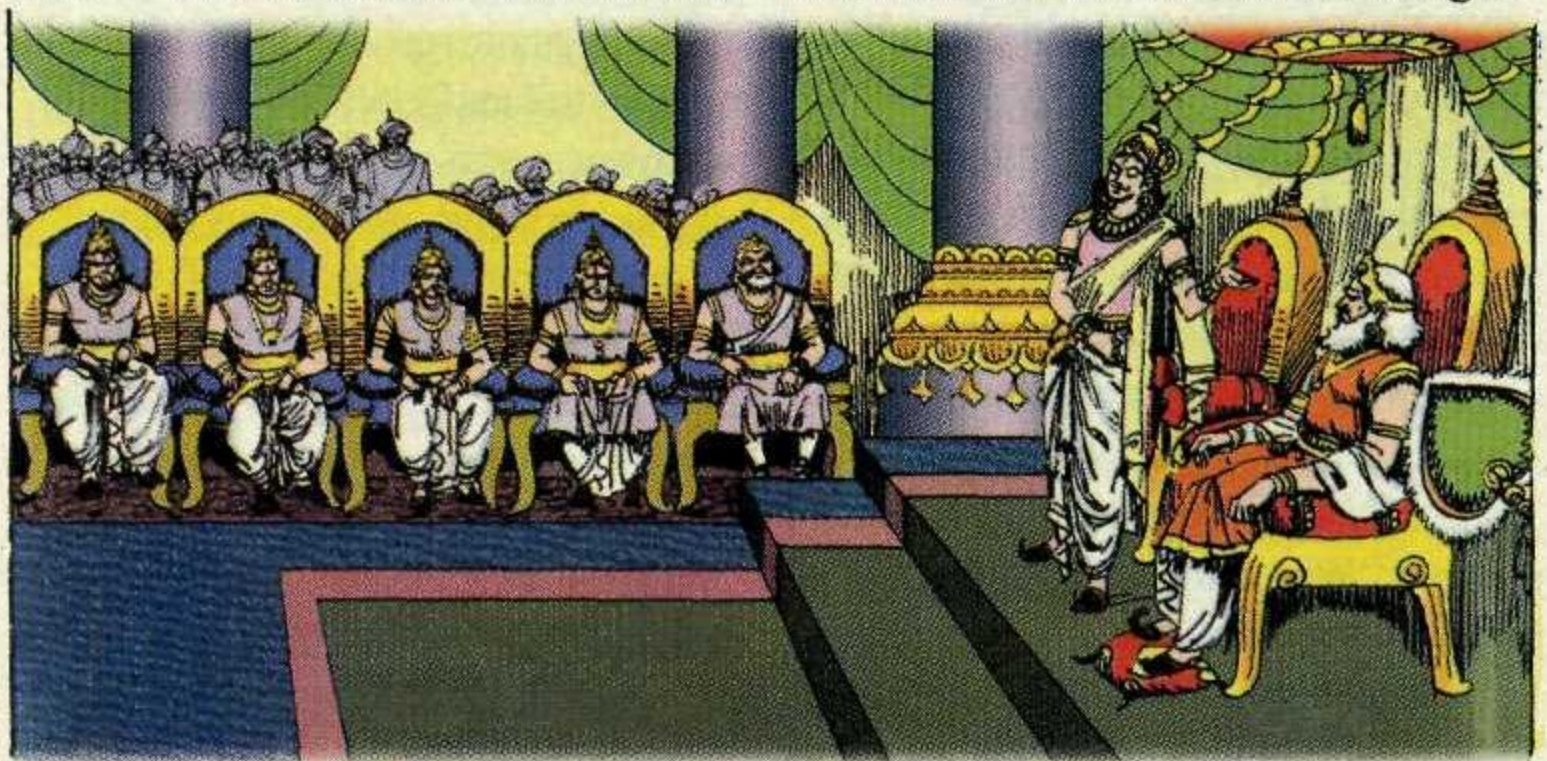
Yudhishtira accepted the advice of all their well-wishers and prepared to take up the burden of a ruler.

A chariot with a white canopy was got ready for his journey into the city. Sixteen white bulls drew the chariot. Bhima took over as the charioteer. Arjuna stood behind Yudhishtira, holding an umbrella above his head. Nakula and Sahadeva walked on either side. Yudhishtira's chariot was

followed by that of Yuyutsa and another carrying Krishna and Sathyaki. Gandhari, Dhritarashtra, Kunti, Draupadi, and the Kaurava women were led by Vidura, in a variety of vehicles that went ahead of the procession. The tail was formed by the fourfold army. Yudhishtira reached Hastinapura amidst the chanting of mantras. The decorated city looked bright with symbols of welcome adorning the gates.

Thousands of people came to see Yudhishtira on his entry into the city. They sang songs of joy. Ministers and noblemen bowed their heads and said: "We are fortunate to have you back as our king, for your path to the throne has been the path of truth."

Yudhishtira was duly coronated. He was seated on a specially erected platform. A sacred fire was lit and Krishna, blowing his conch-shell, declared Yudhishtira as the King of



Hastinapura and blessed him, saying he would come to rule over the whole earth. Dhritarashtra and others echoed the benediction. Yudhishtira received greetings and gifts from the people and he himself presented gifts to the Brahmins.

He told the gathering: "To me, Dhritarashtra is like a god. All those who are faithful to me should look upon him as the real ruler. I consider myself only as his servant. He is my king as well as yours."

Yudhishtira declared Bhima as the crown-prince and appointed Vidura as his minister. Sanjaya was made the treasurer and an adviser. He gave assignments and responsibilities to his other brothers and elders.

With Dhritarashtra's permission, Yudhishtira gave Duryodhana's castle to Bhima. Duhshasana's house was given to Arjuna, and the residences of Durmashana and Durmukha went to

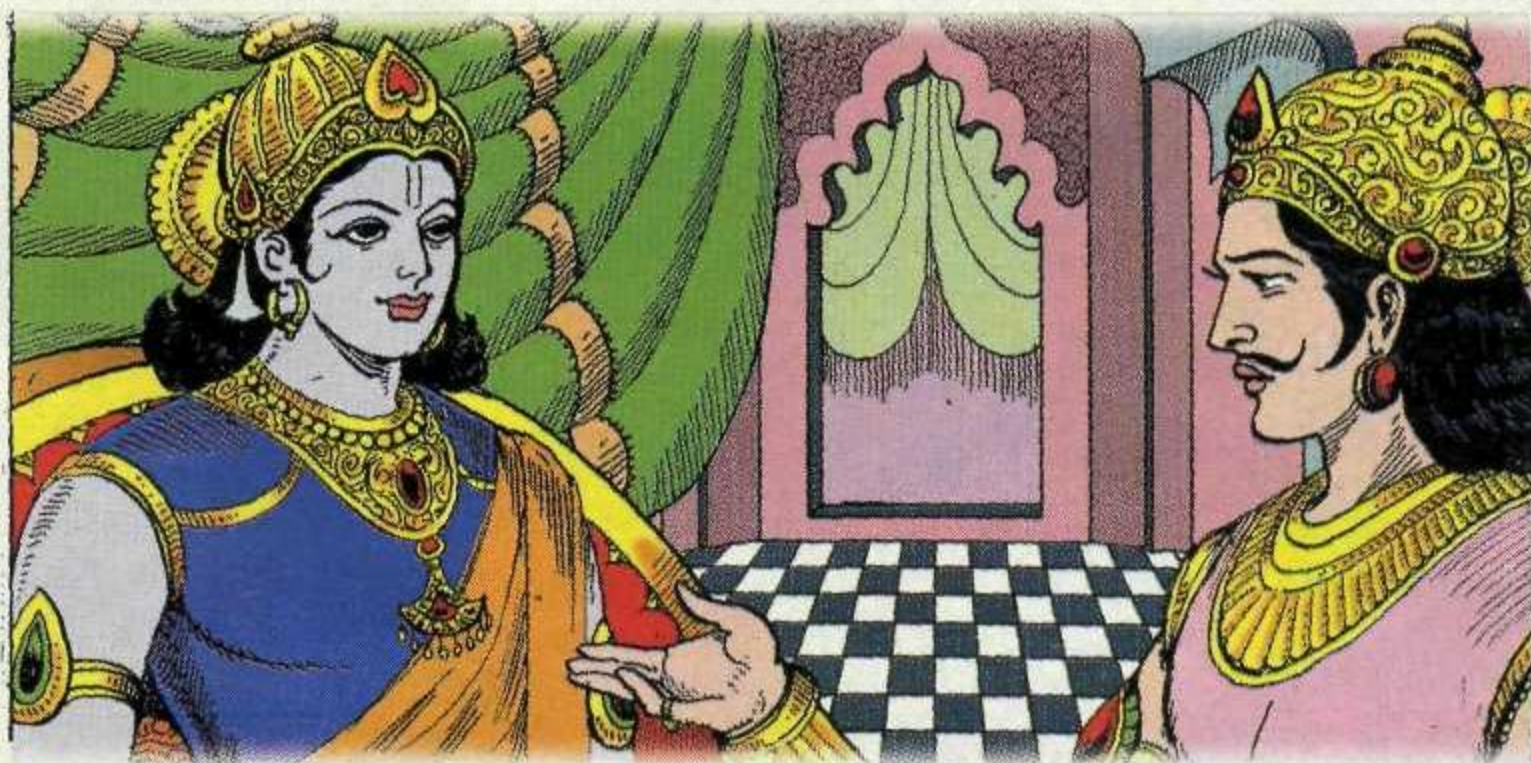
Nakula and Sahadeva. Krishna and Sathyaki stayed with Arjuna.

A few days later Yudhishtira went to Krishna and said: "Kingdom and glory are mine, no doubt. Yet, I've no peace of mind. I feel I've done something wrong. You alone can remove the doubts in my mind."

Krishna silently reflected for a while and said: "The wisest of men is Bhishma. He is still lying on the bed of arrows, awaiting his end. All his wisdom will be lost to the world the moment life goes out of him. Go to him immediately and get your doubts cleared by him. Let his wisdom be available to the world through you."

"My thoughts are the same as yours," said Yudhishtira. "Please lead me to our Pitamaha's presence. He must be wanting to see you, too."

Krishna called Sathyaki and asked him to get ready the chariots for a visit to Bhishma. The first one carried



Krishna and Sathyaki, the second one had Yudhishthira and Arjuna, the third Bhima, Nakula, and Sahadeva. They were followed by other chariots carrying Kripacharya, Yuyutsa, and Sanjaya.

The auspicious time for Bhishma's death was approaching. Still he welcomed Yudhishthira and told him: "To kill the enemy on the battlefield is perfectly in accordance with the princely duties." He went on enumerating many subtle principles and laws till the last moment of his life. Then he closed his eyes for the last time.

Something strange happened while everybody looked on. As the soul left Bhishma's body gradually, the arrows on which he lay fell off one by one.

The Pandavas, along with Vidura, arranged his funeral pyre. Bhishma's body was covered with a white sheet and flowers. With deep reverence, the Pandavas lifted the body and placed it on the pyre, with Dhritarashtra holding

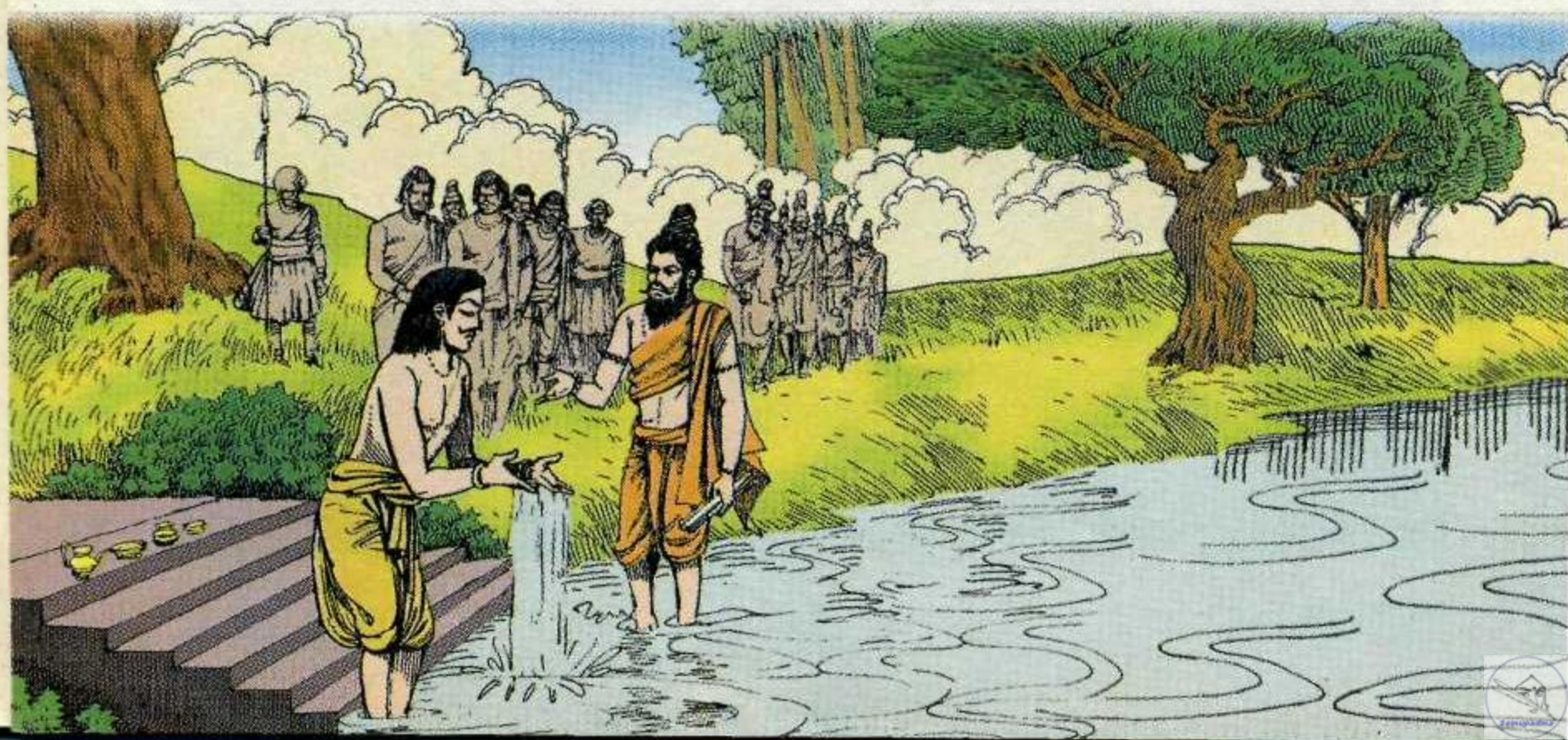
Bhishma's legs. After the body was consumed by the fire they all went to the Ganges, where Yudhishthira performed the necessary rites.

Sage Vyasa urged Yudhishthira to perform Aswamedha which would make him the King of kings.

Yudhishthira replied: "O sage! Such a yagna would require a huge amount of wealth, for, I may have to give gifts to numerous persons. At the moment I have no wealth for distributing big gifts. You must be aware of the period of misery the people were passing through. I cannot impose taxes or ask for tribute."

Vyasa told him how to secure the necessary wealth. Long ago, King Marutta had bestowed rich gifts on the Brahmins at the conclusion of a ceremony. The Brahmins had deposited the wealth in the Himalayas. That wealth could now be collected and used.

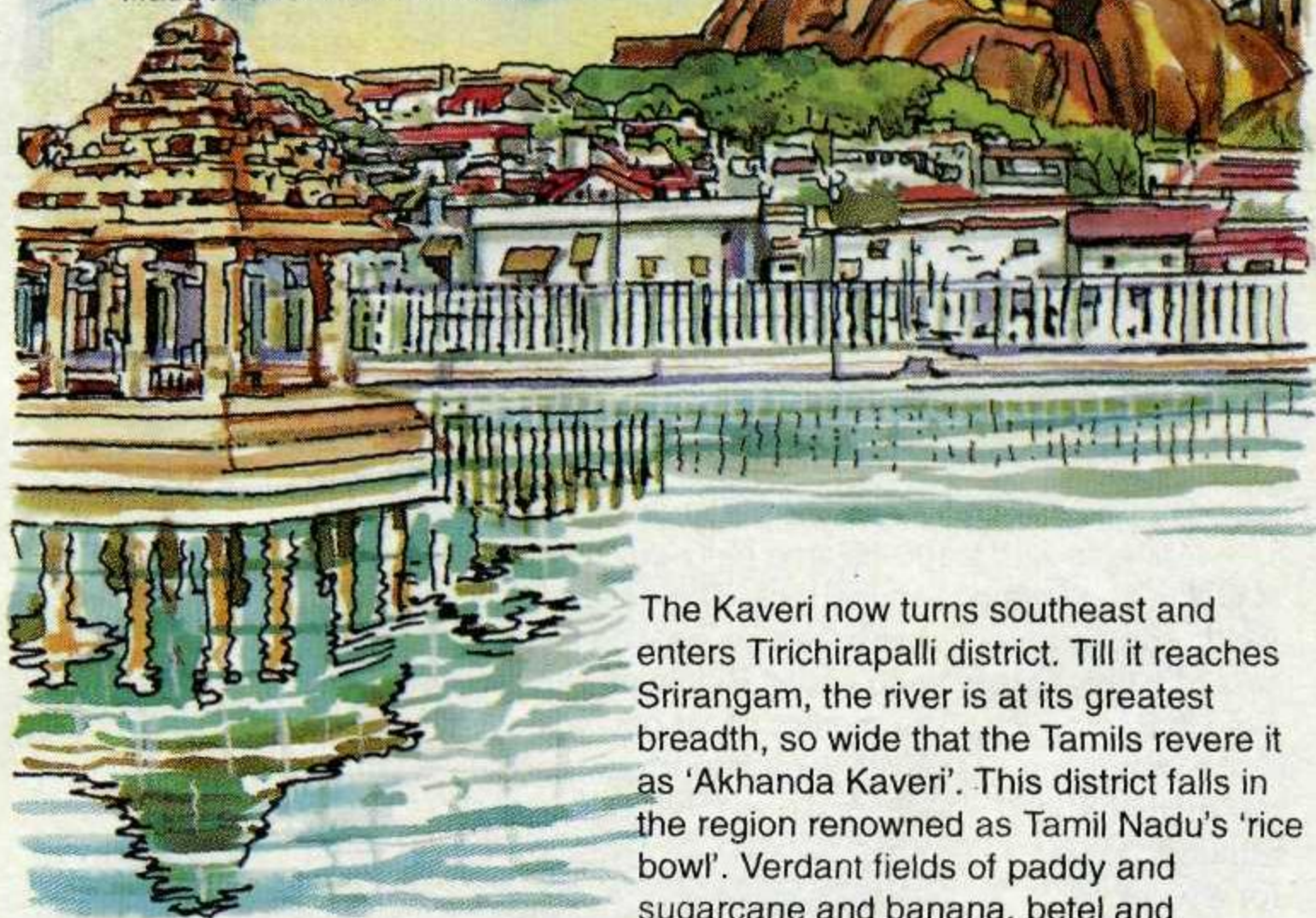
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The Last Island

Text : Jayanthi Mahalingam

Illustrations: Goutam Sen



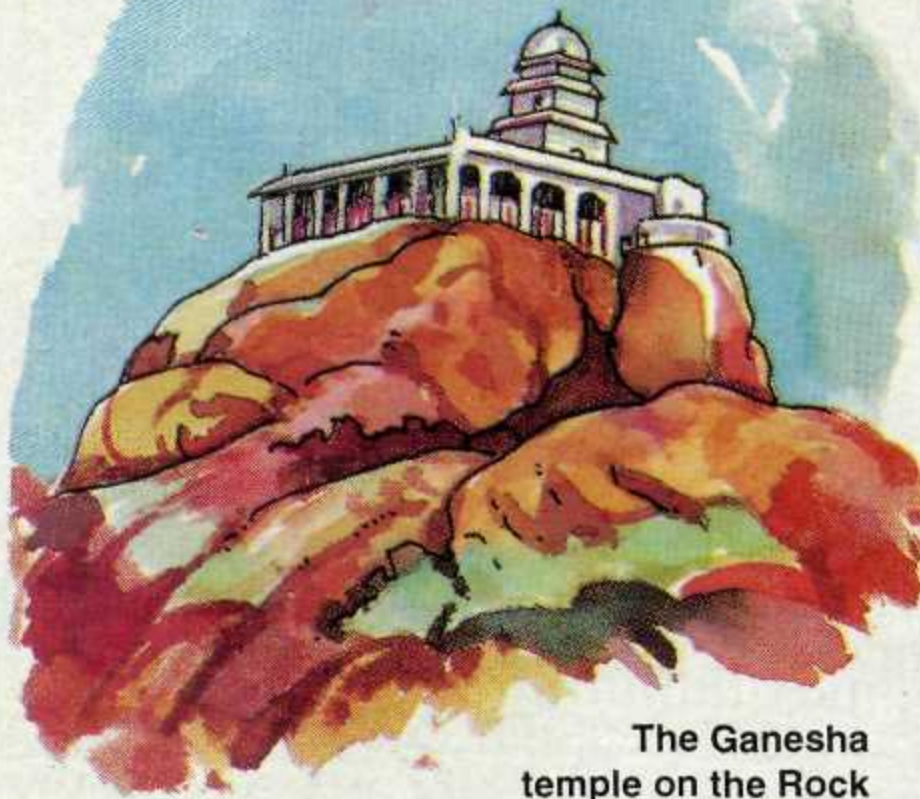
The Rock Fort and temple atop it seen across the Teppekulam or tank

The Kaveri now turns southeast and enters Tiruchirapalli district. Till it reaches Srirangam, the river is at its greatest breadth, so wide that the Tamils revere it as 'Akhandha Kaveri'. This district falls in the region renowned as Tamil Nadu's 'rice bowl'. Verdant fields of paddy and sugarcane and banana, betel and coconut groves stretch to the horizon on both sides of the river bank.

The name 'Tiruchirapalli' is said to be derived from 'Tirisiras' a three-headed demon slain at this spot. The most

spectacular view of the undivided Kaveri can be had from the summit of Trichy's Rock Fort after a steep climb of 344 steps. The fort is situated atop a naturally-formed 83 m-high rock which is believed to be geologically one of the most ancient in the world — around 3,800 million years old! The fort was originally built by the Chola kings between the 2nd century B.C. and the 2nd century A.D. when Trichy was their capital city. Locally called *Malaikottai*, the fort has been witness to many battles, the most recent one being the crucial Carnatic Wars between the English and the French in 1751. Trichy was under siege for nearly three years. Ultimately Robert Clive won the day. The fort is now in a dilapidated condition, with only the main guard gate intact.

Perched on the summit is the Uchipillaiyar Koil, a shrine to the elephant-headed god Ganesha. On the way down are other temples built in the face of



The Ganesha temple on the Rock

the rock. The oldest are the Pallava cave temples carved out on its southern face. Inscriptions on them prove beyond doubt that they were excavated during the reign of the Pallava king Mahendra-varman I (600 to 630 AD). There are sculptures of Hindu gods and goddesses and an inscription on the figure of Gangadhara waxes poetic on the Kaveri's beauty. The river is 'beloved of the Pallava king and rightfully belongs to him. She captivates the eye...the

meadows on her banks are like garlands on her neck...'

A temple with a 100-pillared hall dedicated to Shiva as Matrubhuteshwara is located half-way down the rock. The deity is also known as *Thayumanavar*, which can be roughly translated as 'he who also became a mother'. The story tells of a pregnant woman called Ratnavati who was awaiting her mother who lived in Poompuhar. The mother could not cross over as the Kaveri was in flood. In the meantime, Ratnavati went into labour and Shiva himself took the form of her mother and attended to her for a week till her mother could reach Trichy! There is also a saint by the same name who wrote devotional poems called *Sivan Seyyal*.

About 7 km from Trichy, the Kaveri bifurcates and forms the last island on its course. This is Srirangam or *Antyaranga*. A magnificent



The golden vimana of the Srirangam temple

temple to Sri Ranganathaswami (Vishnu) reclining on Adishesha was built on Srirangam, most probably in the 3rd or 4th century A.D. A hoary legend narrates that the sanctuary of the Srirangam temple was given by Rama to Vibhishana. On the journey back to Lanka, Vibhishana felt tired and lay down to rest on the bank of the Kaveri. When he awoke and tried to lift the sanctuary, he found, to his consternation, that it had become fixed to the ground. His loud lamentation drew the attention of the Chola king who consoled him. Lord Ranganatha himself appeared and said that he wished to dwell on the sacred banks of the Kaveri. To comfort Vibhishana, he declared that he would recline facing south, in the direction of Lanka. The temple was then built around the sanctuary.



The *gopuram* of the Srirangam temple

The temple at Srirangam, also known as 'Tiruvarangam', or just 'Koil', is the biggest in India — spread over 6,31,000 sq m. The sanctum lies within seven enclosures. The outermost enclosure measures 864 m by 742 m. The three outer ones contain shops and houses, a small town in itself, with more than a million inhabitants. There are 21 *gopurams* or multi-tiered ornate entrances, among which the Rajagopuram, the largest in South India, towers 72 m high, dominating the landscape for miles around. Work on the 13-tiered *gopuram* actually began in the 18th century but was disrupted due to the Anglo-French wars. It was completed in 1987. The sanctum itself is small, a mere 72 m by 54 m. In the semi-gloom barely lit by the glow of oil-lamps, it is only when the priest holds the burning camphor high over the idol, that devotees can catch a glimpse of the deity.

There are shrines in the temple to the twelve *Alvars*, the renowned Vaishnava saint-poets. Their songs were recovered and arranged in a collection known as *Nalaiyra Prabandham*, by Nadamuni the founder of the Srivaishnava cult. His disciple Ramanujacharya, the great Vaishnava teacher and Vedanta philosopher also has a shrine in the Srirangam temple.

In the fourth enclosure is a lovely temple in Hoysala style to Venugopala Krishna with charming sculptures, making it one of the most beautiful temples in South India. Here, too, is the Hall of a Thousand Pillars, where the processional car is kept. There is a colonnaded hall named after Kamban, the great Tamil

author of the *Kamba Ramayana*, a monumental work, which was released here.

During the reign of the Nayak rulers of Madurai and Thanjavur, the Srirangam temple received lavish gifts of land and other endowments. The temple was renovated and new structures were added.

Achyutappa Nayak was the most generous and he had an able prime minister, Govinda Dikshitar to help him in his good works. The *vimana* was covered in gold during his tenure. The Rock Fort was also repaired and fortified during the reign of the Nayaks.

There is an intriguing shrine to a Muslim princess whose devotion to Sri Ranganatha was profound. She was known as *Thulukka Nachiyar* (Muslim matron). An offering of *chappatis*, butter, milk and green gram is made to the lord every morning, and a portion placed before her shrine.

The biggest festival at the temple is held during December-January, during *Vaikuntha Ēkadashi*. On this occasion the deity is taken out in procession in the temple car which is pulled by thousands of devotees, who vie for the honour. In March-April, the lord is taken out again in a grand parade to the Nachiyar temple in Uraiyur, near Trichy, the former Chola capital. Here, he meets his consort in a nine-day round of festivities, which includes a quarrel between the couple, mimed by two groups of priests!

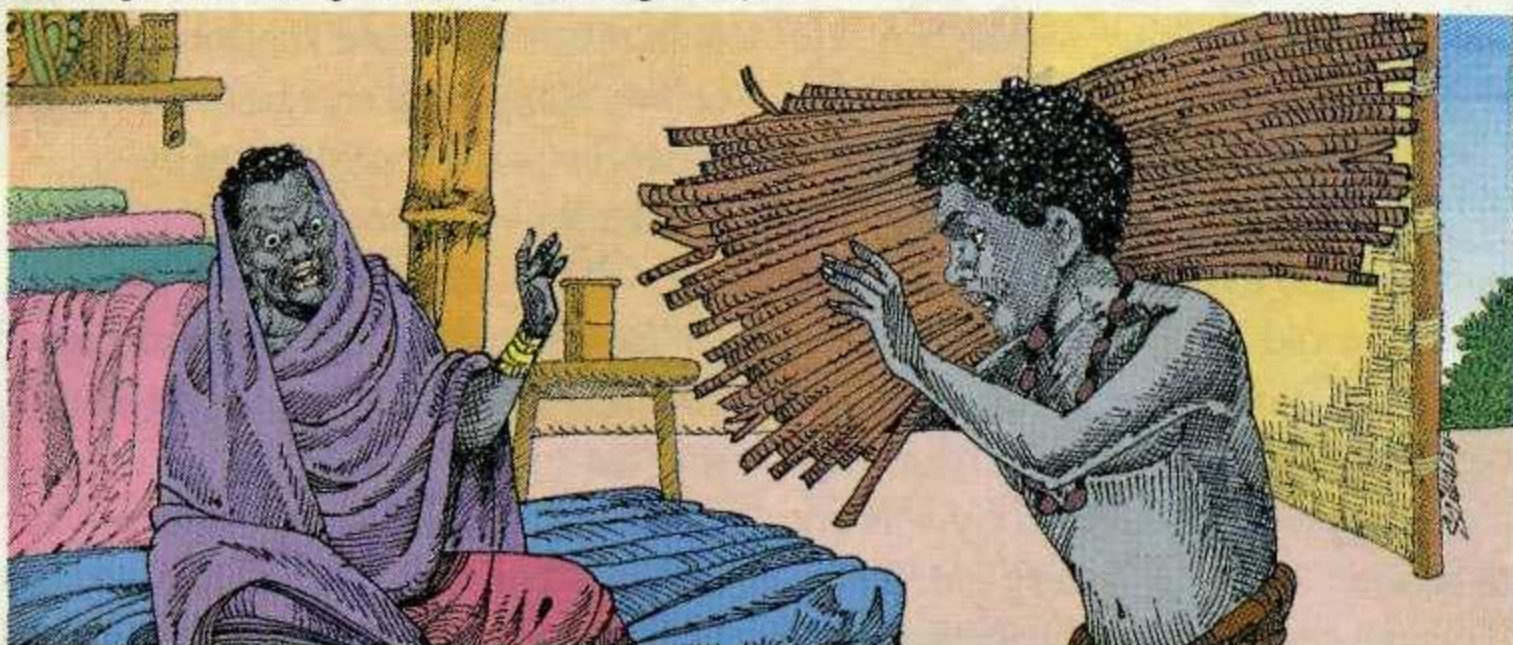
There is even an annual ceremony on the Tamil New Year's day, in which the temple treasurer presents himself before the god in a special costume. He enacts the parody of renting the lands and villages (that formerly belonged to the temple), to an imaginary tenant, thus re-affirming that the Lord Ranganatha is still and will forever be, their true owner!

Though the Kaveri encircles the island, the two branches do not rejoin completely at the eastern end of Srirangam. One arm strikes out separately northwards, forming the major tributary called the Coleroon or Kollidam. At the very point of division, a Chola king called Karikalan who ruled 1600 years ago, built a marvellous dam known as the *Kalanai* or Grand Anicut.

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Sculptures in the Hall of a Thousand Pillars, Srirangam temple



TWO FATHERS AND A SON

Dotun was a poor woodcutter. He was very happy when his son Tundy grew up to be a healthy boy, accompanied him to the forest, and helped him in his work.

One day Dotun fell ill and could not go to the forest. He sent Tundy to the forest. On the way, he met some boys of his age and kept playing hide and seek with them in the forest. When it was noon and he returned home, he had brought very little wood with him.

Dotun was angry. "You stupid boy, what are we going to eat tomorrow if we cannot sell sufficient quantity of wood today?" he shouted and slapped

Tundy, and the boy ran away. "Never come back!" he screamed behind his fleeing son.

Tundy ran for a long time. Tired and hungry, he sat down under a tree, and soon fell asleep.

It was evening. A wealthy trader of a distant village was riding by, accompanied by his servants. He stopped when his eyes fell on the sleeping Tundy. He got off his horse and so did his servants. He woke up Tundy. "Who are you? Why are you lying here?" he asked.

"I've no home and I'm hungry," replied Tundy.



Never can the king be compared with the learned. While the king is adored in his own kingdom alone, the learned is adored wherever he goes. **-Chanakya**



The trader gave him some food. He took an instant liking for the boy. He had no son. So, he led Tundy to his house and began treating him like his son.

Dotun soon realised that he had been unkind to his son. He hoped that Tundy would come back home when it was dark. But that did not happen. The next day he looked for Tundy here, there and everywhere. But the boy was not to be seen. Dotun was very sad. But as days passed, he made peace with the situation.

Meanwhile, Tundy was looked upon as the trader's adopted son. He was taught the principles of business and he learned them well. From time to time he remembered his home and his parents, but would try to forget them too, though he did not succeed fully.

The trader found in Tundy a faithful and truthful young man. He and his wife bestowed all their love on the boy.

Years passed. One day Dotun, who was returning from the bazaar after selling some ivory that he had found in the forest, saw Tundy riding by.

"Hello, rider, look here!" he called out.

Tundy stopped. Dotun went closer and gazed at him. "Aren't you Tundy, my lost son?" he asked.

Tundy got down and greeted his father. "Yes, indeed, I'm Tundy," he said. He felt sad to find his father old and weak. "Come with me to my present home and relax," he said.

Both reached the trader's house. Tundy introduced Dotun to the trader and the trader welcomed him. The night passed. In the morning, Dotun told the trader: "I wish to take my son back home."

"No, my friend, he is no longer your son. He is my son. You drove him out of your home. He had no home when I gave him shelter. So, this is his home,"



the trader told Dotun politely.

"It is God who helped me find my son. How can I go back home without taking him with me? If once I had got angry with him, that was nothing unnatural!" pleaded Dotun.

"But to lose him after so many years will become unnatural for us!" asserted the trader.

The dialogue continued for long. At last the trader stood up and said: "I've found a solution to the problem. We'll leave the matter to Tundy. Let him decide whether he would stay with me or go back with you."

Well, Tundy was a grown up young man and his decision had to be final, agreed Dotun. The trader proposed that they waited till the next morning.

Early next morning, the trader asked both Dotun and Tundy to follow him. He held a sharp sword in his hand. Dotun and Tundy were surprised, but

walked behind him.

The trader stopped at a lonely place between a forest and a river. He then handed over the sword to Tundy.

"My boy, you have to act!" he said.

"What do you want me to do?" the young man asked.

"If you decide to go back with your first father, you behead me. If you wish to stay with me, your second father, behead him," he said.

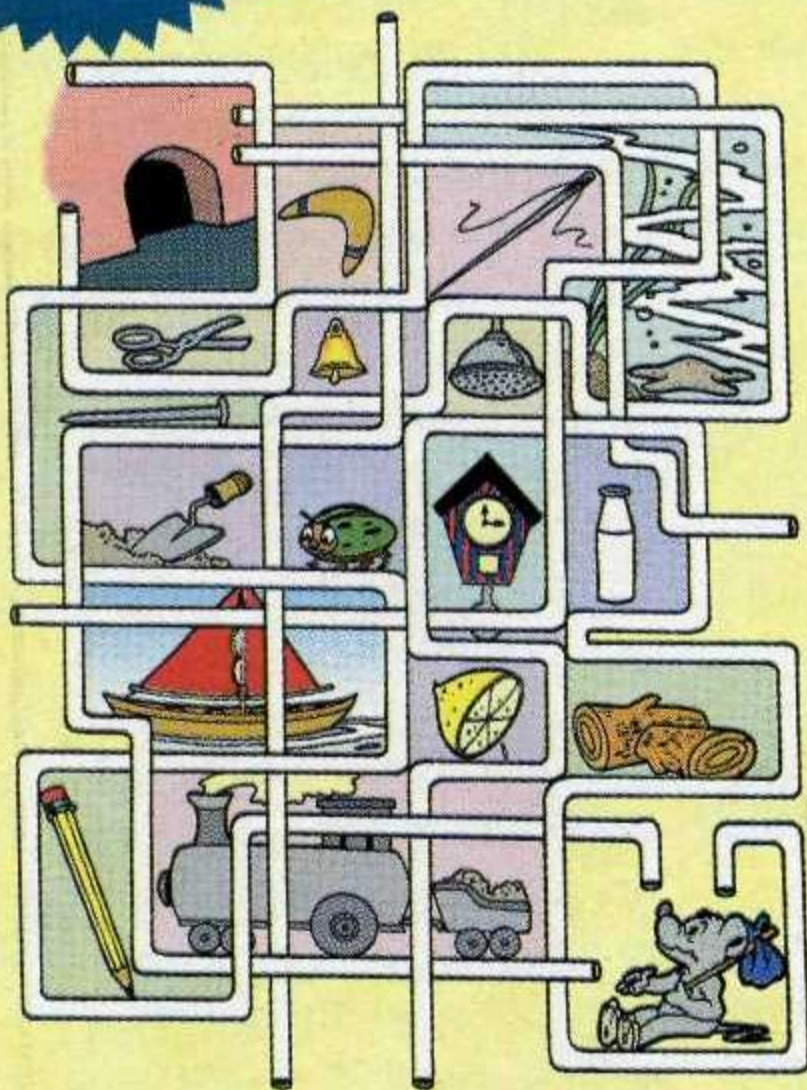
Tundy stood in silence, his head hung. Then he bowed to both the men and said: "I've decided upon my course of action. I shall behead myself."

He raised the sword aiming at his own neck. But both the men hurriedly stopped him. All the three shed tears. Soon they found out a different solution to the problem. Dotun and his wife came over to the trader's home. Indeed, Tundy proved a worthy son to both pairs of parents.



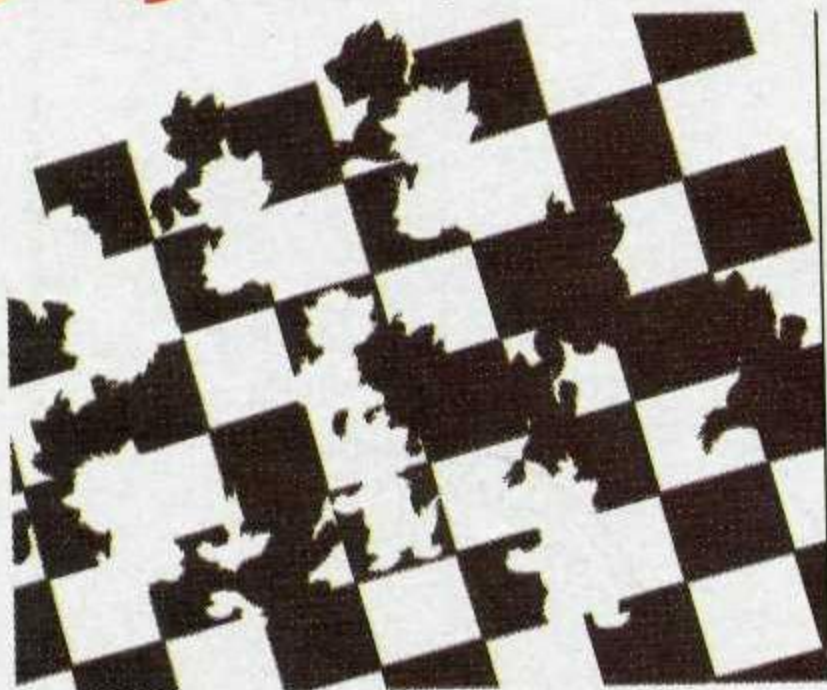
WAY MAZE

It's a month since Ratty has been on a holiday. It's now time to go home! How?

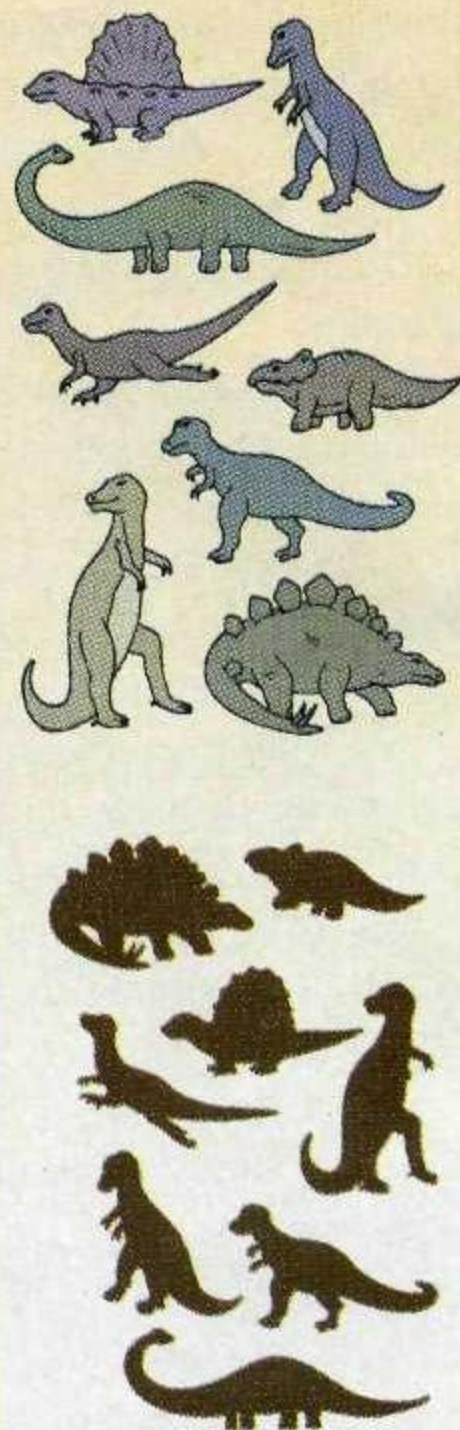


Jungle

How many cats can you see in the puzzle?



SHADOW PLAY

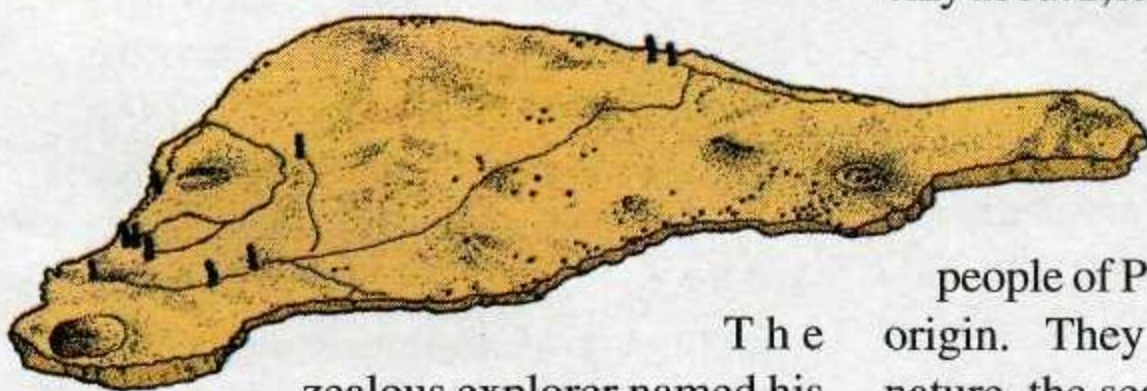


LET'S SHADE THE
SHADOWS WITH THEIR
CORRECT COLOURS!



THOSE GIANT FIGURES ON A TINY ISLAND

On the Easter Day of 1722, Jacob Roggeveen, a Dutch admiral, was awestruck as he landed on a queer, little, triangular-shaped island in the South Pacific Ocean. For, in front of him lay an incredible landscape! A host of colossal statues, hundreds of them, stood like silent sentinels all along the periphery of this wee bit of rocky, arid earth.



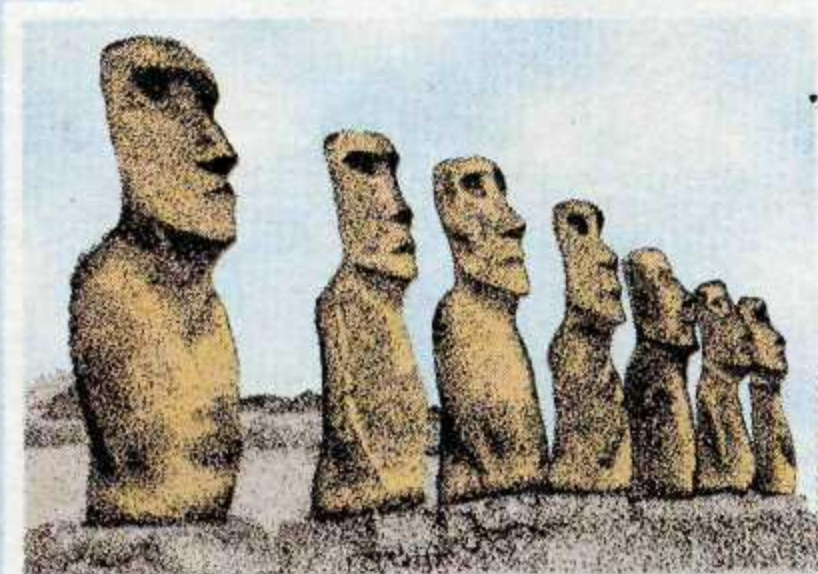
The zealous explorer named his discovery the Easter Island, as it was on this day that he had set foot on it, the first European to do so. Also known as Isla de Pascua in Spanish and Rapanui, this islet covering an area of approximately 45 square miles is situated about 2,000 miles west of the Chilean coast. The easternmost outpost of Polynesia, the island was appended to Chile in 1888. It is formed by three

extinct volcanoes and swept by strong trade winds; as a result the climate is warm throughout the year. Its main source of fresh water is the rain that gathers in the crater lakes. The western coast of the region is reserved by the Government for the native population and the rest of the area is used as pasture land. According to the 1989 estimate, only about 2,095 people were living here.

Nestling far away from any populated land, the Easter Island shelters very simple people of Polynesian and aboriginal origin. They are more familiar with nature, the sea, the sun, the moon, the stars than with any other modern nation. But little is known of the ancient culture of these islanders, whose ancestors carved extraordinary stone monuments and incised hieroglyphic script on wooden tablets, the only source of evidence of a form of writing in Polynesia. Archaeologically the Easter Island is the richest site of megaliths in the Pacific Ocean.



But what has cast a spell on man down the ages are the gigantic statues that fringe the coast of this remote speck of rock. Some of them stand as high as 66 feet and weigh as much as 50 tons. Yet how were these giants moved to their final resting place in those ancient times? Till this date this enigma has never been satisfactorily explained and remains as baffling as ever!



Most of the statues were mounted on burial platforms called *ahu*. A typical *ahu* is formed of a wall running parallel to the sea measuring upto 300ft in length and 15 feet in height. A single platform might support 1 to 15 statues. There are about 260 such platforms all along the coast of the island. These platforms were in fact used for the exposure of the dead and contained vaults for the burial of bones. They were probably considered as sacred places and some if not all of the statues were erected in honour of ancestors.

The colossal statues consist of only the upper half of the body with huge upturned face and elongated ears and

nose and they vary in height from 3 to 36 feet. Even an immense unfinished statue about 68 feet long has been found by explorers in the quarry from where it had never been moved. Most of the statues on the burial platforms bore cylindrical, brimmed crowns, the largest weighing approximately 27 tons and others not less than 10 tons. Material for the statues was quarried from the large crater of the volcano called Rano-raraku and the stone for the hats was brought from a different quarry. How these crowns were hoisted high up in the air to rest on the towering figures of stone remains a mystery.

These giant statues stand round the edge of the island and not in the interior. What could be the reason behind this unusual layout? It seems, according to tradition, the island was known as the "navel of the world". What for? An orally prevalent legend recounts that men flying from the sky landed here and lit fires in a bygone era. Some sculptures with flying creatures and large eyes tend to confirm this story. Subsequently, the natives also named their country the "Land of the bird men".

Such huge statues on this wee little island are indeed amazing! Still more amazing is the fact that this totally isolated and thinly populated island had its own script. But alas, it is yet to be deciphered! Who knows, perhaps the wooden tablets with strange hieroglyphs and inscriptions hold the key to the enigma that is Easter Island!



The birth of a son for the grand Moghul, Emperor Shah Jehan, and Begum Mumtaz was naturally a joyous event. That was on the 20th of March 1615. The palace went festive.

The prince, named Dara Shukoh, grew up to be a brilliant young man. He was kind and courteous to all. But what was more, he rarely wasted time on luxuries and enjoyment which ordinarily kept the princes occupied. He devoted most of his time to study the great Indian scriptures like the Vedas and the Upanishads. He invited learned scholars

to his palace and discussed philosophy and spirituality with them for weeks at a stretch.

He translated some of the Upanishads and the *Bhagavad Gita* into Persian. He was convinced that there was no essential difference between the Hindu thought and the Muslim thought so far as the spiritual goal of life was concerned. He

wrote a book titled *Samudra Sangama* (mingling of two oceans) in his effort to highlight the similarities in the two faiths.

Unfortunately, while Prince Dara was busy with such worthy pursuits, his younger brother, Aurangzeb, was hatching a conspiracy against him. An opportunity came for Aurangzeb when Shah Jehan fell ill. Dara was defeated in a battle. He took refuge in the house of one Jiwan Khan, who was the governor of Dadar. Once Dara had saved the life of Jiwan. But the treacherous fellow handed over his saviour to Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb, in his heinous and cruel zeal, paraded his noble elder brother who was the rightful heir to the throne,

BORN

THIS MONTH

through the streets of Delhi. Dara was put to death on 30th of August 1659. His son, Sulaiman, was killed inside the prison in 1662. Aurangzeb also brought about the death of his two other brothers, Murad and Shuja.

Words of Dara Shukoh

The view that God can be perceived only in the next, and not in this world, does not stand to reason. For, if He be omnipotent, then, surely, He can manifest Himself and lead to His own perception in any manner, anywhere, and at any time. One who cannot perceive Him here (in this world), will find it very difficult

DARA SHUKOH The Symbol of Quest for Truth



to perceive Him there (in the next world).



Through a desire of my own Self, which is nothing but Vishnu Himself, having made my mind the Mandara-hill (the churning rod) and my resolution and irresolution, gods and demons (respectively, the churners on opposite sides), having then churned the ocean of the Scriptures, I have extracted such a gem of knowledge out of it, which the gods and the demons could not get even though they extracted as many as fourteen gems by churning the oceans.

Through the adoration and knowledge of God alone have I got strength to finish the *Samudra Sangama*.



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1st March 2000

B. VISWANATHA REDDI

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Myself and My World

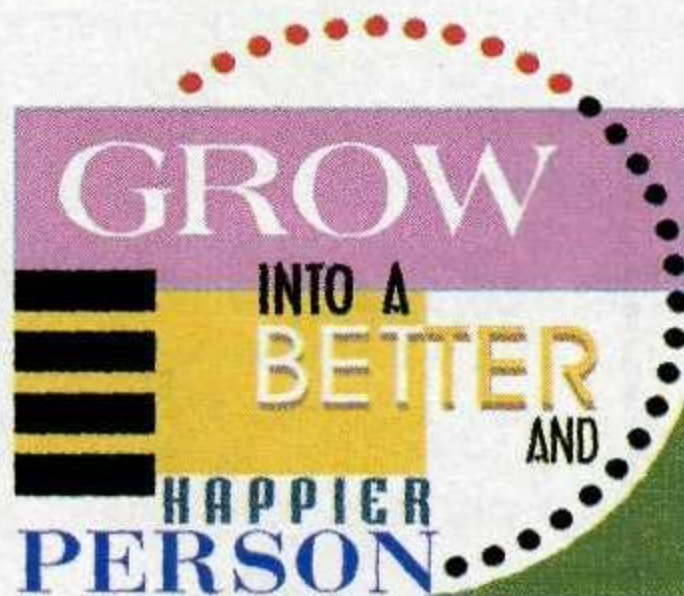
EXCHANGING SILVER FOR GOLD

In one of the novels of the famous Russian writer, Mikhail Solokov, there is a character, a goody goody old man, who loves to talk. Be it necessary or not, he must talk – whatever be the topic. And he would always preface his speech by saying, “You see, a good word is like a piece of silver.”

One day, at last, he was told, “Look here, fellow, a good word may be a piece of silver, but silence is golden. Why don’t you exchange all your silver for gold?”

Indeed, only if man could harness his tongue, the world would be free from a fat lot of troubles. The amount of misunderstanding that arises from a wrong and twisted interpretation of words is very large. That is why Shakespeare wrote: “Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice.” And this wisdom has prevailed since most ancient times. In the 3rd century B.C., Zeno, a philosopher living in Athens, said: “We have two ears but only one mouth so that we can listen to others more and ourselves talk less.”

Talking less in conversations requires you to speak thoughtfully and speak only what is necessary. That will automatically make our listeners more attentive to our words. That will also preserve our energy and allow us more time to think before making a statement. No doubt there are moments when if we



are in a jolly company, we laugh and speak in a lighter vein. Even it will pay to be circumspective. If we make a joke on a certain physical trait, a caste, a profession, or a region, we must be sure that nobody among our listeners feel offended because he may have that trait or may belong to the category of people we are referring to. In any case, we must think twice before narrating any unkind or sharply satirical anecdote. It may give us momentary pleasure, but only at the cost of making somebody bitter for long.

With modern means of speech communication at our disposal we tend to be superfluous. When the telephone was put to use, someone exclaimed before Henry David Thoreau (1817-62), the eminent American thinker, that now people in Massachusetts could speak to people in Texas! Asked Thoreau: “What if the people in Massachusetts have nothing to say to the people in Texas?”

Well, we should wonder how much we say even when we have nothing to say!



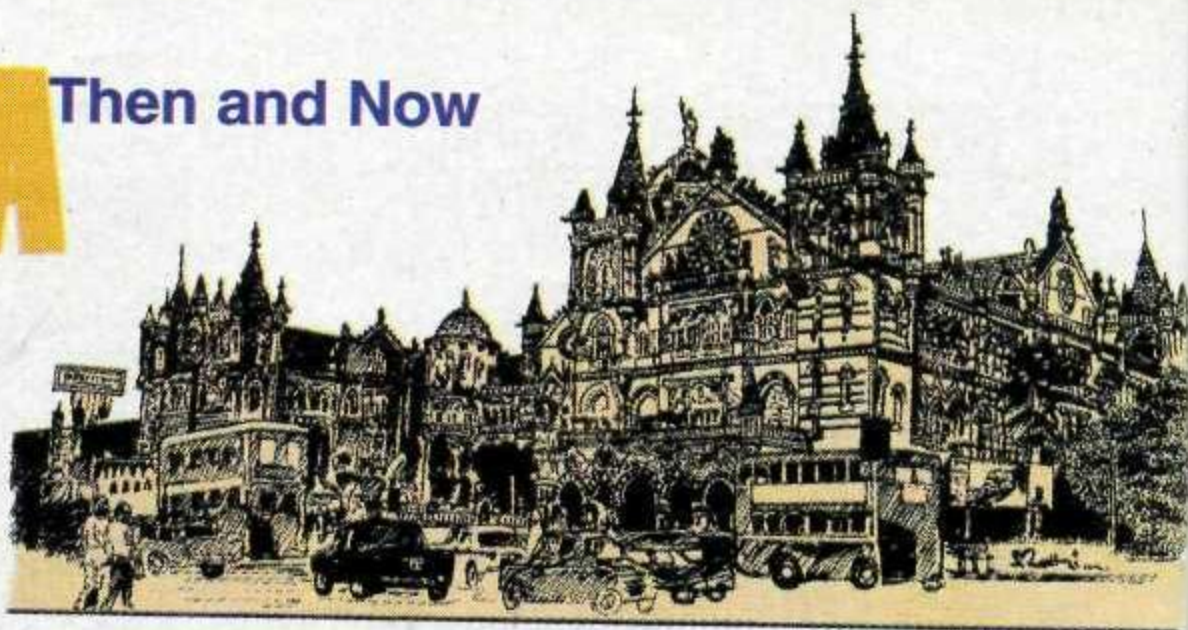


INDIA

Then and Now

MUMBAI

RESTING OVER SEVEN ISLES



We cannot now see the seven isles which were once separate from one another, but together they were called Bombay – a name derived from Mumbadevi or Mumbabai, the presiding deity of the city. Her original name was Amba Bhawani. Now Bombay is called Mumbai – a name closer to its pre-colonial identity.

Its colonial past goes back to the 16th century. The Portuguese general, Albuquerque, conquered Goa in 1510 and, in 1534, became the landlord of a vast zone which included *Prina Urbis* or the city beautiful as they called it.

There was, of course, no city in any modern sense of the term in that zone. But there were bazars – or small towns, because centuries before Christ, the

area had attracted Assyrian, Persian, and Roman traders.

However, the Portuguese did not consider the zamindari to be very valuable. They gave it over as dowry to the British Prince Charles II, when their princess, Catherine de Braganza, married him.

And what did King Charles think of the gift? It was worth not more than ten pounds a year! For, he leased it out to the East India Company at that rate!

By and by the seven isles became one land and one with the mainland, too.

Fast was its growth and prosperity. Once yielding ten pounds a year to its owners, today Mumbai, the capital of Maharashtra, is the financial capital of India. The headquarters of all the



important banks are situated in Mumbai. It has the country's biggest stock exchange. Thirty -three per cent of the total income tax the nation realises comes from Mumbai.

It was from Mumbai that India's first railway train steamed to its first destination, Thana, way back in 1853. Mumbai also was the first harbour for ships from Europe and today it is the country's biggest harbour. Its contribution to India's freedom struggle, too, is unique in the sense that the first session of the Indian National Congress was held in Bombay in 1885.

While each age of Mumbai's history has left its memory in the form of monuments, the Afghan church, the Gateway of India, the Chhatrapati Shivaji Railway Terminus (earlier known as the Victoria Terminus), and the Mahalakshmi temple are some of the city's important landmarks.

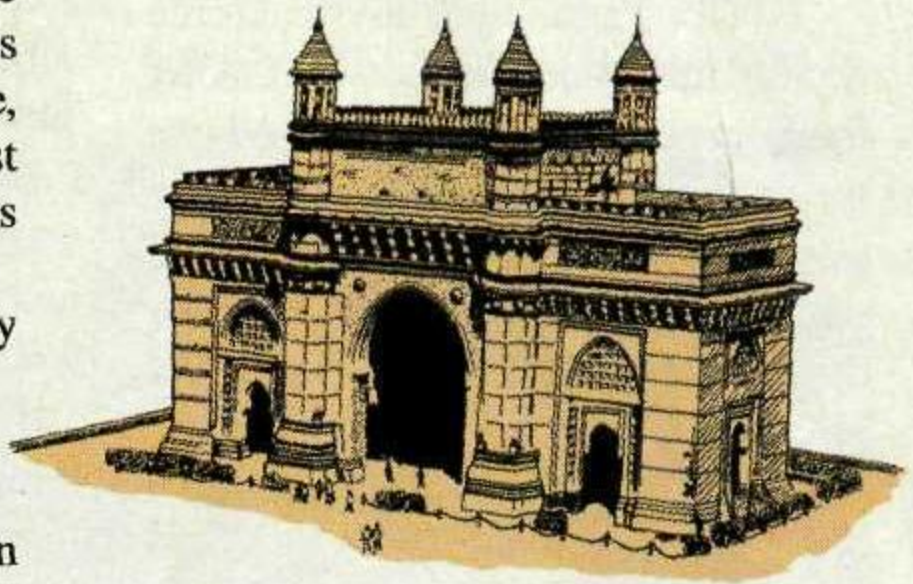
Legend has it that Parasurama prayed to the Lord of the Sea for a bit of land to continue his meditation. His wish was granted. He created a Shiva *linga* and shot an arrow on the sand (*waluka*) for sweet water, which surfaced and came to be called Ban

(arrow) *ganga*. The temple dedicated to Walkeshwar and the pond (Banganga), near Malabar Hill, are another landmark.

Mumbai is probably the largest film-producing centre in the world.

The city becomes festive on occasions like Ganesh Chaturthi.

Today the Greater Mumbai has a population of over 99 lakh. While the



city is teeming with administrative, trade, cultural, and educational establishments, its suburbs are marked by numerous big and small industries.

Mumbai on the Arabian sea – with its necklace-like Marine Drive and green Malabar Hills, continues to be one of the charming cities of the world, despite being overcrowded.



TIBET CLAIMS THE WORLD'S ATTENTION – ONCE AGAIN

Not long ago, brute physical force decided many things in the world. After the Second World War (1939-1945), the situation began to change. Political problems were solved through understanding and negotiations.

But brute force still plays a role. As you know, India had many princely states. The rulers of these states were given the option to merge with either India or Pakistan. Like the rulers of hundreds of states, the ruler of Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh, decided to merge

his state with India. But Pakistan, without any legal right, keeps a great part of the state under its occupation. That is known as Occupied Kashmir.

Similarly, China began to occupy Tibet in the fifties of the 20th century. Though geographically adjacent to China, Tibet had its own culture and its own government. The Dalai Lama headed the Buddhist religious faith as well as the government of Tibet. The 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, took refuge in India. He runs a government-in-exile from his headquarters at Dharamsala.

Next to the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama was the leader of the



Tibetan people. China has kept the office of the Panchen Lama under its grip. China tried to do the same thing with the third important head of the Tibetan people known as Karmapa. The present Karmapa, 17th in the line, whose name is Ugyen Trinley Dorjee, escaped to India and reached Dharamsala in early January.

The Karmapa is in his teens. Obviously, he found the Chinese mastery over Tibet intolerable. With a few companions, he walked a long distance, covering hundreds of kilometres of snow and difficult gorges and passes, facing blizzards and violent wind.

In an interview to *The Heritage*, a sister publication of the *Chandamama* (1985-1989), the Dalai Lama spoke about the havoc the Chinese played with Tibet. He said: "During the so-called cultural revolution, most of the

religious and cultural books were destroyed! And they used those manuscripts as soles of their shoes and paper wrappers or dumped into manure pits."

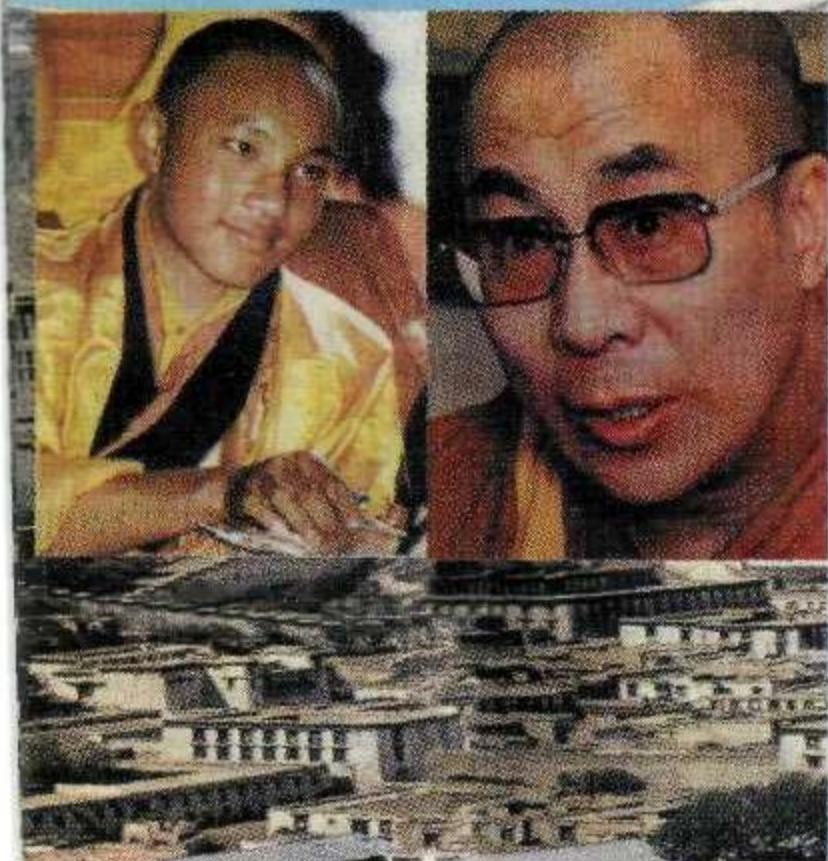
The Heritage asked him, whether that sort of attitude had changed. "Yes, that has changed!" said the Dalai Lama.

The world expects that it will change further and Tibet will be granted at least



autonomy. The Dalai Lama and the Karmapa should be able to return to their capital, Lhasa.

Tibet is called "the roof of the world", because of its high altitude. Even its lowest areas are almost 4,000m above the sea-level. Agriculture and sheep-rearing are the major preoccupations of the Tibetans. They also trade in wool, musk, gold, wheat, and barley. Yak is the animal on which they depend most, for it can withstand severe cold. Almost all Tibetans are Buddhists. They are hard-working and simple in nature.



✱ **What is the meaning of "food chain"?**

-P.M. Anantakrishnan, Vijayawada

We all know that green plants need water and carbon dioxide. When there is sunlight, chlorophyll (the green substance in plants) converts water and carbon dioxide into sugars which get into the system of animals, like cattle, as they eat the leaves of the plants. These herbivorous animals are eaten by carnivores (meat-eaters) including animals like tigers and lions, and human beings. Similarly, small fishes eat planktons in the sea, and they are in turn eaten by bigger fishes like whales and sharks. Bigger fish, at least parts of them, are killed by human beings for their meat. Animal and human wastes go back to the soil from which the plants receive water and carbon dioxide. That makes a chain, doesn't it?

✱ **What is the expansion of DTP? What does it mean?**

- Malini Oberoi, Moradabad.

Desk-top Publishing or DTP is a method by which a page of a book or a magazine or a newspaper can be designed. What one needs will be a personal computer (PC), a word processor, graphics, and page lay-out software. After the text matter is composed and corrected, the lay-out is designed on the computer to take in photographs or diagrams or drawings. This facilitates positioning of the photos/drawings and aligning of the text suitably. The lay-out can be changed any number of times with just a flick of the 'mouse'. DTP has become very useful for newspapers and magazines. Once the page is ready, it is converted into a photographic film (negative). The negative is

converted to positive which is once again converted into negative, not on a film but on a plate. When paper is pressed to the plate, what is printed on the paper turns "positive". DTP is nowadays widely used for designing advertisements. Incidentally, the term DTP was coined by a British designer, Paul Brainerd.

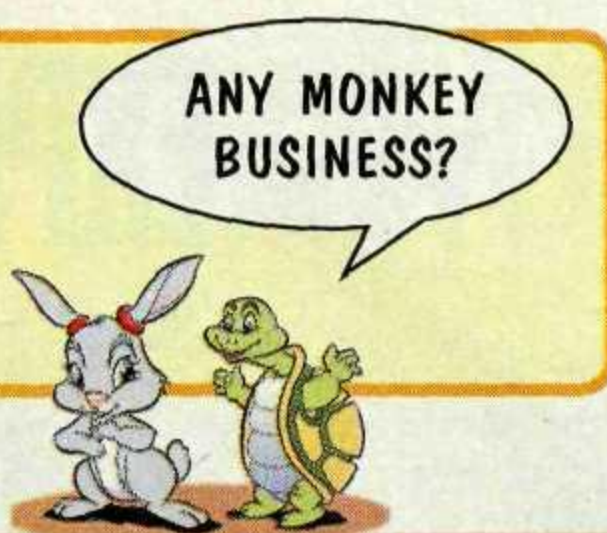


✱ **How is pasteurization done?**

- Meenakshi Namasivayam, Nagercoil

The word pasteurization takes off from Louis Pasteur, a French scientist, who invented the technique of ridding food items, like milk, of micro-organisms (bacteria, virus, yeast, molds) and preserving them for several days together. The method is to heat the item, say milk, to boiling point and suddenly cooling it to chilling temperatures. By heating all organisms are killed, while cooling prevents any further growth of organisms.

Towards Better English



WHO GETS EXCITED BY BANANAS?

The play was over, and Sumant Misra and Jeevan Prasad of Lucknow went up the stage to compliment their English professor for the excellent production. While they were proceeding to the bus stop, Jeevan made a remark: "He has **gone bananas** over his new play." Before Sumant could ask his friend what he meant, he hopped into his bus and went away.

To go bananas simply means to go crazy, to get excited over something (in this case, staging a play) or to be overcome by emotion. Haven't we seen monkeys screaming with joy when they are offered bananas – one of their favourites? Probably, we have to thank monkeys for giving us this expression!

What is meant by the idiom "**tarred with the same brush**" ? asks Jyoti Ranjan Biswal from Durgapur.

If the other members of the family have the same shortcoming or weakness or fault as possessed by one of them, they are said to be tarred with the same brush. Tar, as you know, is a thick black sticky substance which cannot be easily removed from any surface. "To tar and feather" is another idiom. This is to punish somebody by smearing him or her with tar and then insulting by covering with feathers!

Manohar Shetty had suddenly stopped visiting his friend Ramakant Bhatt of Mangalore. After almost a year they met, when Manohar apologetically told Ramakant how he had suffered unexpected setbacks in his business and how he was even thinking of running away from home out of sheer frustration. Then, his father-in-law went to his rescue. "**He gave me a leg up,**" said Manohar as he took leave of his friend. What does he mean by that? wonders Ramakant. Did the old man give him a kick or something?

No, not at all. Why should Ramakant have any doubt when Manohar had referred to his father-in-law with affection? To give someone a leg up means extending help in time of need. After he survived a crash in business, thanks to his father-in-law, Manohar could hold his head high and meet friends without any feeling of shame.

DISCOVER, EXPRESS YOURSELF

Answers to the quiz published in this issue will appear in the next issue. Meanwhile you are welcome to send your answers to Discovery of India Quiz, Chandamama Buildings, Vadapalani, Chennai - 600 026. *But to qualify as a contestant, you must also do an imaginative exercise: please read all the quotes and fillers (which appear on several pages) in the February 2000 issue and tell us which one (give only the page no.) appealed to you most and why. Please do not use more than a hundred words to say this.* Please write your age, the name of the educational institution, and your class if you are a student, and your full address. Put down your signature below your answer and let it be certified by one of your parents or teachers.

1st Prize : Rs. 1000

2nd Prize : Rs. 500

Plus five
Congratulatory prizes
of Rs.200 each



A young man met a sage and sought his advice on a certain matter. The sage did not answer immediately and the young man waited.

The sage's wife was drawing water from a well. He called out to her and she came rushing to him at once, leaving the water-pot midway up the well. To his utter astonishment, the young man saw that the pot did not fall into the well even though nobody held the rope. It stayed put without any support. He understood that while the lady was extremely devoted to her husband, she had also miraculous powers.

Who was this sage? What was the name of his wife?



How are the following pairs of mythological characters and places related to each other?



Chandamama: one spirit in many languages



AND BAG A REWARD



- i. What is the ancient work which contained 25 tales of King Vikram and the Vetala?
- ii. What was the name of Ujjain during the time of Kalidasa?
- iii. Who was the most eminent dramatist before Kalidasa?

iv. Which renowned poet of ancient India was a king but became a Yogi? What are his works?

v. Which Canto of Valmiki's *Ramayana* is believed to have been added later?



MAY I HAVE YOUR
ATTENTION
PLEASE!

CONDITIONS :

* Employees of Chandamama India Ltd. and their families/associates are not allowed to participate.

* The judges' decision will be final and no correspondence will be entertained in this regard.

* Illegible entries cannot be considered.

* The results will be published in the June 2000 issue of Chandamama.

* Answers should reach us on or before 31st March 2000.

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| a. Dhritarastra | – Gandhara |
| b. Savitri | – Salva |
| c. Sahadev | – Madradesa |
| d. Karna | – Anga |
| e. Babruvahan | – Manipur |

the spirit of light and delight



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? You may write it on an ordinary post card and mail it to



PHOTOCAPTION
CONTEST

CHANDAMAMA

Vadapalani
Chennai-600 026



to reach us by the 25th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 100/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.



The Prize for the January 2000 contest goes to :

VIJAYA CHARI

53-C-1, "Suvarna", Gokulpeth,
Nagpur-440010, Maharashtra.



The winning entry :

"Rhythm in Marching"—"Rhythm in dancing"

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